WILLIAM MORRIS TO WHISTLER

PAPERS & ADDRESSES ON ART & CRAFT AND THE COMMONWEAL, BY

WALTER · CRANE

THE J. F. C. HARRISON
COLLECTION OF
NINETEENTH CENTURY
BRITISH SOCIAL HISTORY

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PAPERS AND ADDRESSES ON ART AND CRAFT AND THE COMMONWEAL

BY WALTER CRANE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR & OTHER SOURCES

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PREFACE

OF the collected papers and addresses which form this book, the opening one upon William Morris was composed of an address to the Art Workers' Guild, an article which appeared in "The Progressive Review," at the instance of Mr. J. A. Hobson, and a longer illustrated article written for "The Century Magazine," and now reprinted with the illustrations by permission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, to whom my thanks are due.

"The Socialist Ideal as a New Inspiration in Art" was written for "The International Review," when it appeared under the editorship of Dr. Rudolph Broda, as the English edition of "Documents du Progrès."

"The English Revival in Decorative Art" appeared in the "Fortnightly Review," and I have to thank Mr. W. L. Courtney for allowing me to reprint it. It has some additions.

"Notes on Early Italian Gesso Work," was written for Messrs. George Newnes's Magazine of the Fine Arts with the illustrations, and I am obliged to them for leave to use both again.

"Notes on Colour Embroidery and its Treatment" was written at Mrs. Christie's request for

"Embroidery," which she edited, and I have Messrs. Pearsall's authority to include it here.

"The Apotheosis of 'The Butterfly'" was a review written for "The Evening News," and I thank the editor for letting me print it again. It appears now, however, with a different title, and considerable additions.

"A Short Survey of the Art of the Century" appeared in a journal, the name of which has escaped me, but it has been largely rewritten and added to since.

For the rest, "Modern Aspects of Life and the Sense of Beauty" was originally addressed as the opening of a debate at the Pioneer Club, in which my late friend Lewis F. Day was my opponent, and my chief supporter was Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P.

"Art and the Commonweal" was an address to the Students of Art at Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the paper "On Some of the Arts allied to Architecture" was given before the Architectural Association. That "On the Study and Practice of Art" was delivered in Manchester before the Art School Committee and City authorities, and the "Notes on Animals in Art" to the Art Workers' Guild in London.

WALTER CRANE.

KENSINGTON,
September 1911.

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ERRATA

Page 50, line 4 from foot, *for* "Burgess" *read* "Burges."
Page 92, line 2, *for* "Le Thangue" *read* "La Thangue."
Page 134, line 14, *for* "give" *read* "gives."
Page 190, line 7 from foot, *for* "Fringe" *read* "Frieze."
Page 198, line 2 from foot, *for* "Central Provinces" *read* "Central India."

WILLIAM MORRIS AND HIS WORK

PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM MORRIS. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY EMERY WALKER.

WILLIAM MORRIS AND HIS WORK

IF it is agreed that art, after all, may be summed up as the expression of character, it follows that the more we realize an artist's personality the clearer understanding we shall get of his work. So remarkable a personality as that of William Morris must have left many distinct, and at the same time different, impressions upon the minds of those who knew him, or enjoyed his friendship in life.

It is difficult to realize that fifteen years have passed away since he left us; but from the dark and blurred background of changing years his character and work define themselves, and his position and influence take their true place, while his memory, like some masterly portrait, remains clear and vivid in our minds—re-presented as it were in the severe but refined draughtsmanship of time.

With so distinct and massive an individuality it was strange to hear him say, as I once did, that of the six different personalities he recognized within himself at different times he often wondered which was the real William Morris! Those who knew him, however, were aware of many different sides, and we know that the "idle dreamer of an

empty day" was also the enthusiastic artist and craftsman, and could become the man of passionate action on occasion, or the shrewd man of business, or the keen politician also, as well as the quiet observer of nature and life. Even the somewhat Johnsonian absoluteness and emphasis of expression which characterized him generally, would occasionally give way to an open-to-conviction manner, when tackled by a sincere and straightforward questioner.

But Morris was above and before all else a poet—a *practical* poet, if one may use such a term —and this explains the whole of his work. Not that personally he at all answered to the popular conventional idea of a poet, rather the reverse, and he was anything but a sentimentalist. He hated both the introspective and the rhetorical school, and he never posed. He loved romance and was steeped in mediaeval lore, but it was a real living world to him, and the glimpses he gives us are those of an actual spectator. It is not archaeology, it is *life*, quite as vivid to him, perhaps more so than that of the present day. He loved nature, he loved beautiful detail, he loved pattern, he loved colour—"*red* and *blue*" he used to say in his full-blooded way. *His patterns are decorative poems* in terms of form and colour. *His poems and romances are decorative patterns* in forms of speech and rhyme. His dream world and his ideal world were like one

of his own tapestries—a green field starred with vivid flowers upon which moved the noble and beautiful figures of his romantic imagination, as distinct in type and colour as heraldic charges. Textile design interested him profoundly and occupied him greatly, and one may trace its influence, I think, throughout his work—even in his Kelmscott Press borders. One might almost say that he had a textile imagination, his poems and romances seem to be woven in the loom of his mind, and to enfold the reader like a magic web.

But though he cast his conceptions in the forms and dress of a past age, he took his inspiration straight from nature and life. His poems are full of English landscapes, and through the woods of his romances one might come upon a reach of the silvery Thames at any moment. The river he loved winds through the whole of his delightful Socialistic Utopia in "News from Nowhere."

As a craftsman and an artist working with assistants and in the course of his business he was brought face to face with the modern conditions of labour and manufacture, and was forced to think about the political economy of art. Accepting the economic teaching of John Ruskin, he went much further and gave his allegiance to the banner of Socialism, under which, however, he founded his own school and had his own following, and conducted his own newspaper. From the dream

world of romance, and from the sequestered garden of design, he plunged into the thick of the fight for human freedom, in which, he held, was involved the very existence of art.

Ever and anon he returned to his sanctuary —his workshop—to fashion some new thing of beauty, in verse or craftsmanship, in which we see the results of his labour in so many directions.

He certainly seemed to have possessed a larger and fuller measure of vitality and energy than most men—perhaps such extra vitality is the distinction of genius—but the very strenuousness of his nature probably shortened the duration of his life. There were never any half-measures with him, but everything he took up, he went into seriously, nay, passionately, with the whole force of his being. His power of concentration (the secret of great workers) was enormous, and was spent from time to time in a multitude of ways, but whether in the eager search for decorative beauty, his care for the preservation of ancient buildings, in the delight of ancient saga, story, or romance, or in the battle for the welfare of mankind, like one of his own chieftains and heroes, he always made his presence felt, and as the practical pioneer and the master-craftsman in the revival of English design and handicraft his memory will always be held in honour.

His death marked an epoch both in art and in social and economic thought. The press notices

and appreciations that have appeared from time to time for the most part have dwelt upon his work as a poet and an artist and craftsman, and have but lightly passed over his connection with Socialism and advanced thought.

But, even apart from prejudice, a hundred will note the beauty and splendour of the flower to one who will notice the leaf and the stem, or the roots and the soil from which the tree springs.

Yet the greatness of a man must be measured by the number of spheres in which he is distinguished—the width of his range and appeal to his fellows.

In the different branches of his work William Morris commanded the admiration, or, what is equally a tribute to his force, excited the opposition—of as many different sections of specialists.

As a poet he appealed to poets by reason of many distinct qualities. He united pre-Raphaelite vividness (as in "The Haystack in the Floods"), with a dream-like, wistful sweetness and charm of flowing narrative, woven in a kind of rich mediaeval tapestry of verse, and steeped with the very essence of legendary romance as in "The Earthly Paradise"; or with the heroic spirit of earlier time, as in "Sigurd the Volsung," while all these qualities are combined in his later prose romances.

His architectural and archaeological knowledge again was complete enough for the architect and the antiquary.

His classical and historical lore won him the respect of scholars.

His equipment as a designer and craftsman, based upon his architectural knowledge and training enabled him to exercise an extraordinary influence over all the arts of design, and gave him his place as leader of our latter-day English revival of handicraft—a position perhaps in which he is widest known.

In all these capacities the strength and beauty of William Morris's work has been freely acknowledged by his brother craftsmen, as well as by a very large public.

There was, however, still another direction in which his vigour and personal weight were thrown with all the ardour of an exceptionally ardent nature, wherein the importance and significance of his work is as yet but partially apprehended—I mean his work in the cause of Socialism, in which he might severally be regarded as an economist, a public lecturer, a propagandist, a controversialist.

No doubt many even of the most emphatic admirers of William Morris's work as an artist, a poet, and a decorator have been unable to follow him in this direction, while others have deplored, or even denounced, his self-sacrificing enthusiasm. There seems to have been insuperable difficulty to some minds in realizing that the man who wrote "The Earthly Paradise" should have lent

a hand to try to bring it about, when once the new hope had dawned upon him.

There is no greater mistake than to think of William Morris as a sentimentalist, who, having built himself a dream-house of art and poetry, sighs over the turmoil of the world, and calls himself a Socialist because factory chimneys obtrude themselves upon his view.

It seems to have escaped those who have inclined to such an opinion that a man, in Emerson's phrase, "can only obey his own polarity." His life must gravitate necessarily towards its centre. The accident that he should have reached economics and politics through poetry and art, so far from disqualifying a man to be heard, only establishes his claim to bring a cultivated mind and imaginative force to bear upon the hard facts of nature and science.

The practice of his art, his position as an employer of labour, his intensely practical knowledge of certain handicrafts, all these things brought him face to face with the great Labour question; and the fact that he was an artist and a poet, a man of imagination and feeling as well as intellect, gave him exceptional advantages in solving it—at least theoretically. His practical nature and sincerity moved him to join hands with men who offered a practical programme, or at least who opened up possibilities of action towards bringing about a new social system.

His own personal view of a society based upon an entire change of economic system is most attractively and picturesquely described in "News from Nowhere, some Chapters of a Utopian Romance." He called it *Utopian*, but, in his view, and granting the conditions, it was a perfectly practical Utopia. He even gave an account (through the mouth of a survivor of the old order) of the probable course of events which might lead up to such a change. The book was written as a sort of counterblast to Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward," which on its appearance was very widely read on both sides of the water, and there seemed at the time some danger of the picture there given of a socialized state being accepted as the only possible one. It may be partly answerable for an impression in some quarters that a Socialist system must necessarily be mechanical. But the society described in "Looking Backward" is, after all, only a little more developed along the present lines of American social life—a sublimation of the universal supply of average citizen wants by mechanical means, with the mainspring of the machine altered from individual profit to collective interest. This book, most ingeniously thought out as it was, did its work, no doubt, and appealed with remarkable force to minds of a certain construction and bias, and it is only just to Bellamy to say that he claimed no finality for it.

But "News from Nowhere" may be considered —apart from the underlying principle, common to both, of the collective welfare as the determining constructive factor of the social system—as its complete antithesis.

According to Bellamy, it is apparently the *city* life that is the only one likely to be worth anything, and it is to the organization of production and distribution of things contributing to the supposed necessities and comforts of inhabitants of cities that the reader's thoughts are directed.

With Morris the country life is obviously the most important, the ideal life. Groups of houses, not too large to be neighbourly, each with a common guest-hall, with large proportions of gardens and woodland, take the place of crowded towns. Thus London, as we know it, disappears.

What is this but building upon the ascertained scientific facts of our day, that the inhabitants of large cities tend to deteriorate in physique, and would die out were it not for the constant infusion of new blood from the country districts?

Work is still a hard necessity in "Looking Backward," a thing to be got rid of as soon as possible, so citizens, after serving the community as clerks, waiters, or what not, until the age of forty-five, are exempt.

With Morris, work gives the zest to life, and all labour has its own touch of art—even the dustman can indulge in it in the form of rich em-

broidery upon his coat. The bogey of labour is thus routed by its own pleasurable exercise, with ample leisure, and delight in external beauty in both art and nature.

As regards the woman's question, it never, in his Utopia, appears to be asked. He evidently himself thought that with the disappearance of the commercial competitive struggle for existence and what he termed "artificial famine" caused by monopoly of the means of existence, the claim of women to compete with men in the scramble for a living would not exist. There would be no necessity for either men or women to sell themselves, since in a truly co-operative commonwealth each one would find some congenial sphere of work.

In fact, as Morris once said, "settle the economic question and you settle all other questions. It is the Aaron's rod which swallows up the rest."

I gather that while he thought both men and women should be economically free, and therefore socially and politically free, and free to choose their occupation, he by no means wished to ignore or obliterate sex distinctions, and all those subtle and fine feelings which arise from it, which really form the warp and weft of the courtesies and relationships of life.

Now, whatever criticisms might be offered, or whatever objections might be raised, such a con-

ception of a possible social order, such a view of life upon a new economic basis as is painted in this delightful book, is surely, before all things, remarkably wholesome, human, and sane, and pleasurable. If wholesome, human, sane, and pleasurable lives are not possible to the greater part of humanity under existing institutions, so much the worse for those institutions. Humanity has generally proved itself better than its institutions, and man is chiefly distinguished above other animals by his power to modify his conditions. Life, at least, means growth and change, and human evolution shows us a gradual progression —a gradual triumph of higher organization and intelligence over lower, checked by the inexorable action of natural laws, which demand reparation for breaches of moral and social law, and continually probe the foundations of society. Man has become what he is through his capacity for co-operative social action. The particular forms of social organization are the crystallization of this capacity. They are but shells to be cast away when they retard growth or progress, and it is then that the living organism, collective or individual, seeks out or slowly forms a new home.

As to the construction and colour of such a new house for reorganized society and regenerated life, William Morris has left us in no doubt as to his own ideas and ideals. It may seem strange that a man who might be said to have been steeped in

mediaeval lore,[1] and whose delight seemed to be in a beautifully imagined world of romance peopled with heroic figures, should yet be able to turn from that dream world with a clear and penetrating gaze upon the movements of his own time, and to have thrown himself with all the strength of his nature into the seething social and industrial battle of modern England. That the "idle singer of an empty day" should voice the claims and hopes of Labour, stand up for the rights of free speech in Trafalgar Square, and speak from a wagon in Hyde Park, may have surprised those who only knew him upon one side, but to those who fully apprehended the reality, ardour, and sincerity of his nature, such action was but its logical outcome and complement, and assuredly it redounds to the honour of the artist, the scholar, and the poet whose loss we still feel, that he was also a man.

Few men seemed to drink so full a measure of life as William Morris, and, indeed, he frankly admitted in his last days that he *had* enjoyed his life. I have heard him say that he only knew what it was to be alive. He could not conceive of death, and the thought of it did not trouble him.

I first met William Morris in 1870, at a dinner

[1] At the same time, it must be remembered, his knowledge of mediaeval life, the craft guilds, and the condition of the labourer in England in the fifteenth century, helped him in his economic studies and his Socialist propaganda.

at the house of the late Earl of Carlisle, a man of keen artistic sympathies and considerable artistic ability, notably in water-colour landscapes.

William Morris speaking from a wagon in Hyde Park, May 1 1894

He was an enthusiast for the work of Morris and Burne-Jones, and had just built his house at Palace Green from the designs of Mr. Philip Webb, and Morris and Company had decorated it. Morris, I remember, had just returned from a

visit to Iceland, and could hardly talk of anything else. It seemed to have laid so strong a hold upon his imagination; and no doubt its literary fruits were the translations of the Icelandic sagas he produced with Professor Magnússon, and also the heroic poem of "Sigurd the Volsung." He never, indeed, seemed to lose the impressions of that Icelandic visit, and was ever ready to talk of his experiences there—the primitive life of the people, the long pony rides, the strange, stony deserts, the remote mountains, the geysers and the suggestions of volcanic force everywhere, and the romance-haunted coasts.

I well remember, too, the impression produced by the first volume of "The Earthly Paradise," which had appeared, I think, shortly before the time of which I speak: the rich and fluent verse, with its simple, direct, Old World diction; the distinct vision, the romantic charm, the sense of external beauty everywhere, with a touch of wistfulness. The voice was the voice of a poet, but the eye was the eye of an artist and a craftsman.

It was not so long before that the fame began to spread of the little brotherhood of artists who gathered together at the Red House, Bexley Heath, built by Mr. Philip Webb, it was said, in an orchard without cutting down a single tree. Dante Gabriel Rossetti was the centre of the group, the leading spirit, and he had absorbed the spirit of the pre-Raphaelite movement and cen-

tralized it both in painting and verse. But others co-operated at first, such as his master, Ford Madox Brown, and Mr. Arthur Hughes, until the committee of artists narrowed down, and became a firm, establishing workshops in one of the old-fashioned houses on the east side of Queen Square, Bloomsbury, a retired place, closed by a garden to through traffic at the northern end. Here Messrs. Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. (which included a very notable man, Mr. Philip Webb, the architect) began their practical protest against prevailing modes and methods of domestic decoration and furniture, which had fallen since the great exhibition of 1851 chiefly under the influence of the Second Empire taste in upholstery, which was the antithesis of the new English movement. This latter represented in the main a revival of the mediaeval spirit (not the letter) in design; a return to simplicity, to sincerity; to good materials and sound workmanship; to rich and suggestive surface decoration, and simple constructive forms.

The simple, black-framed, old English Buckinghamshire elbow-chair, with its rush-bottomed seat, was substituted for the wavy-backed and curly-legged stuffed chair of the period, with its French polish and concealed, and often very unreliable, construction. Bordered Eastern rugs, and fringed Axminster carpets, on plain or stained boards, or India matting, took the place of the stuffy planned carpet; rich, or simple, flat patterns acknowledged

the wall, and expressed the proportions of the room, instead of trying to hide both under bunches of sketchy roses and vertical stripes; while, instead of the big plate-glass mirror, with ormolu

DESIGN FOR WALL-PAPER. "THE DAISY."

frame, which had long reigned over the cold white marble mantel-piece, small bevelled glasses were inserted in the panelling of the high wood mantel-shelf, or hung over it in convex circular form. Slender black wood or light brass curtain rods,

and curtains to match the coverings, or carry out the colour of the room, displaced the heavy mahogany and ormolu battering-rams, with their fringed and festooned upholstery, which had hither-

DESIGN FOR WALL-PAPER. "ROSE TRELLIS."

to overshadowed the window of the so-called comfortable classes. Plain white or green paint for interior wood-work drove graining and marbling to the public-house; blue and white Nankin, Delft, or Grès de Flandres routed Dresden and

Sèvres from the cabinet; plain oaken boards and trestles were preferred before the heavy mahogany telescopic British dining-table of the mid-nineteenth century; and the deep, high-backed, canopied settle with loose cushions ousted the castored and padded couch from the fireside.

Such were the principal ways, as to outward form, in which the new artistic movement made itself felt in domestic decoration. Beginning with the houses of a comparatively limited circle, mostly artists, the taste rapidly spread, and in a few years Morrisian patterns and furniture became the vogue. Cheap imitation on all sides set in, and commercial and fantastic persons, perceiving the set of the current, floated themselves upon it, tricked themselves out like jackdaws with peacocks' feathers, and called it "the aesthetic movement." The usual excesses were indulged in by excitable persons, and the inner meaning of the movement was temporarily lost sight of under a cloud of travesty and ridicule, until, like a shuttlecock, the idea had been sufficiently played with and tossed about by society and the big public, it was thrown aside, like a child's toy, for some new catch-word. These things were, however, but the ripples or falling leaves upon the surface of the stream, and had but little to do with its sources or its depth, though they might serve as indications of the strength of the current.

The art of Morris and those associated with

him was really but the outward and visible sign of a great movement of protest and reaction against the commercial and conventional conceptions and standards of life and art which had obtained so strong a hold in the industrial nineteenth century.

Essentially Gothic and romantic and free in spirit as opposed to the authoritative and classical, its leader was emphatically and even passionately Gothic in his conception of art and ideals of life.

The inspiration of his poetry was no less mediaeval than the spirit of his designs, and it was united with a strong love of nature and an ardent love of beauty.

One knows but little of William Morris's progenitors. His name suggests Welsh origin, though his birthplace was Walthamstow. Born 24th March 1834, one of a well-to-do family, it was a fortunate circumstance that he was never cramped by poverty in the development of his aims. Escaping the ecclesiastical influence of Oxford and a Church career, his prophets being rather John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle, he approached the study and practice of art from the architectural side under one of our principal English Gothic revivalists, George Edmund Street, although he at one time entertained the idea of becoming a painter, and the very interesting picture of "Guinevere" which was shown at one of the Arts and Crafts Exhibitions makes one regret he did not do more

in this way. Few men had a better understanding of the nature of Gothic architecture, and a wider knowledge of the historic buildings of his own country, than William Morris, and there can be

WOOLLEN HANGING. "THE PEACOCK."

no doubt that this grasp of the true root and stem of the art was of enormous advantage when he came to turn his attention to the various subsidiary arts and handicrafts comprehended under decorative design. The thoroughness of his methods of

work and workmanlike practicality were no less remarkable than his amazing energy and capacity for work.

In one of his earlier papers he said that it

DESIGN FOR SILK HANGING.

appeared to be the object with most people to get rid of, or out of, the necessity of work, but for his part he only wanted to find time for more work, or (as it might be put) to live in order to work, rather than to work in order to live.

While as a decorative designer he was, of course, interested in *all* methods, materials, and artistic expression, he concentrated himself generally upon one particular kind at a time, as in the course of his study and practice he mastered the difficulties and technical conditions of each.

At one time it was dyeing, upon which he held strong views as to the superiority, permanency, and beauty of vegetable dyes over the mineral and aniline dyes, so much used in ordinary commerce, and his practice in this craft, and the charm of his tints, did much to check the taste for the vivid but fugitive colours of coal-tar.

His way was to tackle the thing with his own hands, and so he worked at the vat, like the practical man that he was in these matters. An old friend tells the story of his calling at the works one day and, on inquiring for the master, hearing a strong, cheery voice call out from some inner den, "I'm dyeing, I'm dyeing, I'm dyeing!" and the well-known robust figure of the craftsman presently appeared in his blue shirt-sleeves, his hands stained blue from the vat where he had been at work.

At another time it was weaving that absorbed him, and the study of dyeing naturally led him to textiles, and, indeed, was probably undertaken with the view of reviving their manufacture in new forms, and from rugs and carpets he conceived the idea of reviving Arras tapestry. I re-

member the man who claimed to have taught Morris to work on the high-warp loom. His name was Wentworth Buller. He was an enthusiast for Persian art, and he had travelled in that country and found out the secret of the weaving of the fine Persian carpets, discovering, I believe, that they were made of goats' hair. He made some attempt

COTTON PRINT. "EVENLODE."

to revive this method in England, but from one cause or another was not successful. William Morris, when he had learned the craft of tapestry weaving himself, set about teaching others, and trained two youths, one of whom (Mr. Dearle) is now chief at the Merton Abbey Works, who became exceedingly skilful at the work, executing the large and elaborate design of Sir Edward

Burne-Jones (*The Adoration of the Magi*), which was first worked for the chapel of his own and Morris's college (Exeter College) at Oxford.

In this tapestry, as was his wont, Morris enriched the design with a foreground of flowers, through which the Magi approach with their gifts the group of the Virgin and Child, with St. Joseph.

In fact, the designs of William Morris are so associated with and so often form part of the work of others or only appear in some conditioned material form, that little or no idea of his individual work, or of his wide influence, could be gathered from any existing autograph work of his. That he was a facile designer of floral ornament his numerous beautiful wall-papers and textile hangings prove, but he always considered that the finished and final form of a particular design, complete in the material for which it was intended, was the only one to be looked at, and always objected to showing preliminary sketches and working drawings. He was a keen judge and examiner of work, and fastidious, and as he did not mind taking trouble himself he expected it from those who worked for him. His artistic influence was really due to the way he supervised work under his control, carried out by many different craftsmen under his eye, and not so much by his own actual handiwork.

In any estimate of William Morris's power and influence as an artist, this should always be borne

in mind. He always described himself as an artist working with assistants, which is distinct from the manufacturer who simply directs a business from the business point of view. Nothing went out of the works at Queen Square, or, later,

KELMSCOTT HOUSE. MEETING ROOM OF THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIALIST SOCIETY.

at Merton Abbey, without his sanction from the artistic point of view.

The wave of taste which he had done so much to create certainly brought prosperity to the firm, and larger premises had to be taken; so Morris and Company emerged from the seclusion of Queen Square and opened a large shop in Oxford

Street, and set up extensive works at Merton Abbey—a most charming and picturesque group of workshops, surrounded by trees and kitchen gardens, on the banks of the river Wandle in Surrey, not far from Wimbledon. The tapestry and carpet looms which were first set up at Kelmscott House, on the Upper Mall at Hammersmith,[1] were moved to Merton, where also the dyeing and painted glass-work were carried on.

This latter art had long been an important part of the work of the firm. In early days designs were supplied by Ford Madox Brown and D. G. Rossetti, but later they were entirely from the hands of Morris's closest friend, Edward Burne-Jones; that is to say, the figure-work. Floral and subsidiary design were frequently added by William Morris, as was also the leading of the cartoons. The results of their co-operation in this way have been the many fine windows scattered over the land, chiefly at Oxford and Cambridge, where the Christ Church window and those at Jesus College may be named, while the churches of Birmingham

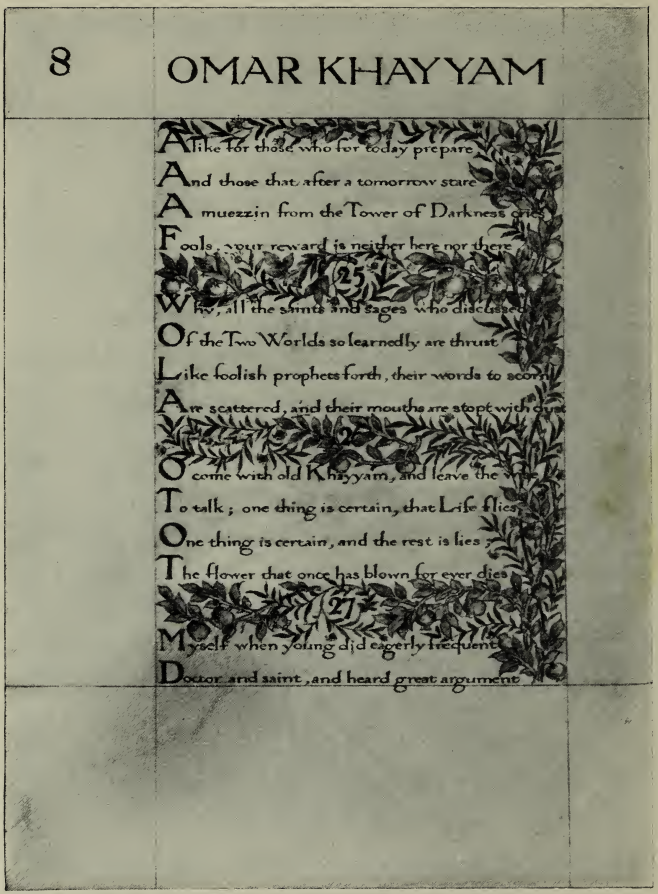
[1] Here Morris lived when in London and his press was set up close by at Sussex House, opposite to which is the Doves Bindery of Mr. Cobden-Sanderson. Much of Morris's time was spent at Kelmscott, near Lechlade, Gloucestershire, a delightful old manor-house close to the Thames stream. This house was formerly held by D. G. Rossetti conjointly with Morris. At Hammersmith the room outside the house, after the carpet looms went to Merton, was used as the meeting room of the Hammersmith Socialist Society.

have been enriched by many splendid examples, more particularly at St. Philip's. Their glass has also found place in the United States, in Richardson's famous church at Boston, and at the late Miss Catherine Wolfe's house, Vinland, Newport.

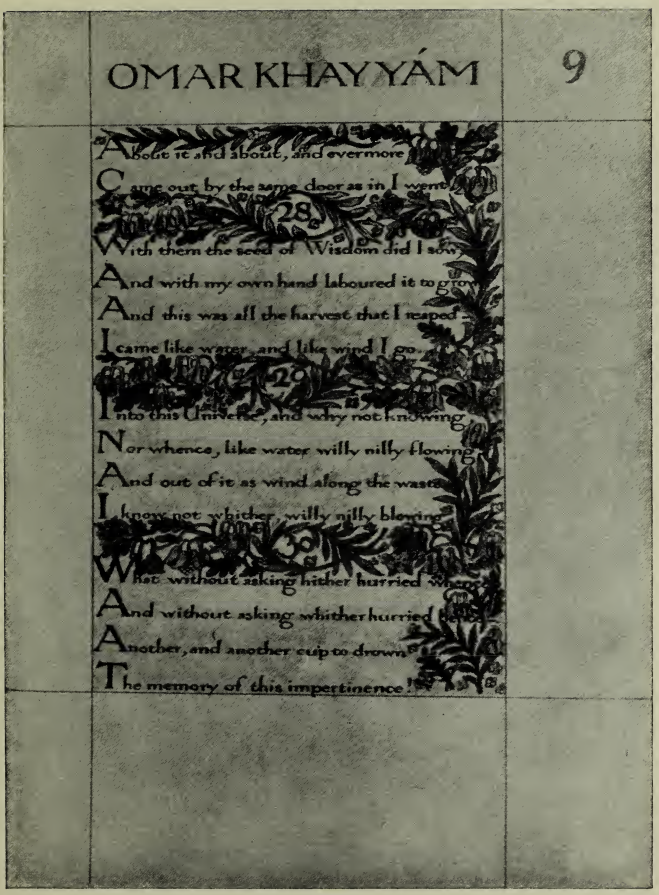
An exquisite autograph work of William Morris's is the copy of "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám," which he wrote out and illuminated with his own hand, though even to this work Burne-Jones contributed a miniature, and Mr. Fairfax Murray worked out other designs in some of the borders. This beautiful work was exhibited at the first Arts and Crafts Exhibition in 1888. It is in the possession of Lady Burne-Jones, and by her special permission I am enabled to give some reproductions of four of the pages here.

It is so beautiful that one wonders the artist was not induced to do more work of the kind; but there is only known to be one or two other manuscripts partially completed by him. Certainly his love for mediaeval illuminated MSS. was intense and his knowledge great, and his collection of choice and rare works of this kind probably unique. The same might be said of his collection of early printed books, which was wonderfully rich with wood-cuts of the best time and from the most notable presses of Germany, Flanders, Italy, and France.

This brings us to William Morris's next and, as it proved, last development in art—the revival



FROM MORRIS'S MS. OF OMAR KHAYYÁM.



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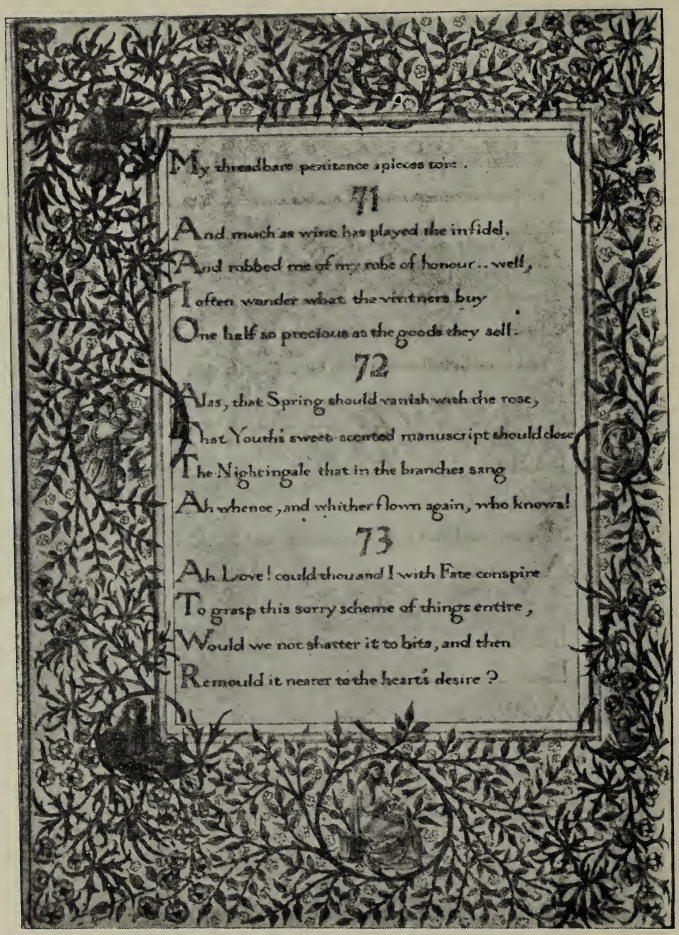

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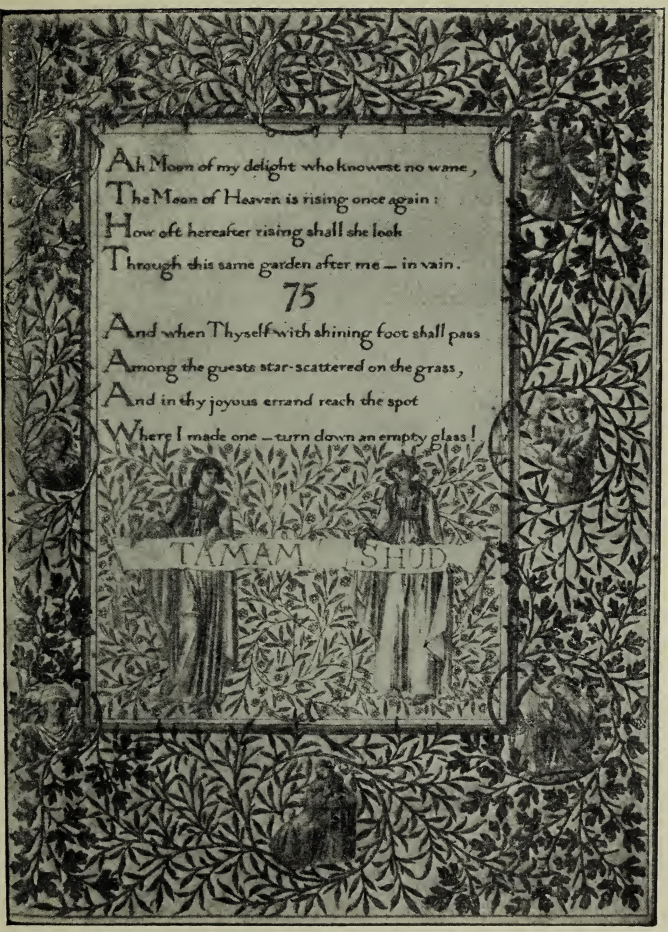


FROM MORRIS'S MS. OF OMAR KHAYYÁM.

of the craft of the printer, and its pursuit as an art.

I recall the time when the project was first discussed. It was in the autumn of 1889. It was the year of an Art Congress at Edinburgh, following the initial one at Liverpool the preceding year, held under the auspices of the National Association for the Advancement of Art. Some of us afterwards went over to Glasgow to lecture; and a small group, of which Morris was one, found themselves at the Central Station Hotel together. It was here that William Morris spoke of his new scheme, his mind being evidently centred upon it. Mr. Emery Walker (who has supplied me with the photographs which illustrate this article) was there, and he became his constant and faithful helper in all the technicalities of the printer's craft; Mr. Cobden-Sanderson also was of the party; he may be said to have introduced a new epoch in book-binding, and his name was often associated with Morris as binder of some of his books.

Morris took up the craft of printing with characteristic thoroughness. He began at the beginning and went into the paper question, informing himself as to the best materials and methods, and learning to make a sheet of paper himself. The Kelmscott Press paper is made by hand, of fine white linen rags only, and is not touched with chemicals. It has the toughness and something

of the quality of fine Whatman or O.W. drawing-paper.

When he set to work to design his types he obtained enlarged photographs of some of the finest specimens of both Gothic and Roman type from the books of the early printers, chiefly of Bale and Venice. He studied and compared these, and as the result of his analysis designed two or three different kinds of type for his press, beginning with the "Golden" type, which might be described as Roman type under Gothic influence, and developing the more frankly Gothic forms known as the "Troy" and the "Chaucer" types. He also used Roman capitals founded upon the best forms of the early Italian printers.

Morris was wont to say that he considered the glory of the Roman alphabet was in its capitals, but the glory of the Gothic alphabet was in its lower-case letters.

He was asked why he did not use types after the style of the lettering in some of his title-pages, but he said this would not be reasonable, as the lettering of the titles was specially designed to fit into the given spaces, and could not be used as movable type.

The initial letters are Gothic in feeling, and form agreeably bold quantities in black and white in relation to the close and rich matter of the type, which is still further relieved occasionally by floral sprays in bold open line upon the inner margins,

while when woodcut pictures are used they were led up to by rich borderings.

The margins of the title and opening chapter which faced it are occupied by richly designed broad borders of floral arabesques upon black grounds, the lettering of the title forming an essential part of the ornamental effect, and often placed upon a mat or net of lighter, more open arabesque, in contrast to the heavy quantities of the solid border.

The Kelmscott Chaucer is the monumental work of Morris's Press, and the border designs, made specially for this volume, surpass in richness and sumptuousness all his others, and fitly frame the woodcuts after the designs of Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

The arabesque borders and initial letters of the Kelmscott books were all drawn by Morris himself, the engraving on wood was mostly done by Mr. W. H. Hooper—almost the only first-rate facsimile engraver on wood left—and a good artist and craftsman besides. Mr. Arthur Leverett engraved the designs to the "The Glittering Plain," which were my contribution to the Kelmscott Press, but I believe Mr. Hooper did all the other work, while Mr. Fairfax Murray and Mr. Catteson Smith drafted the Burne-Jones designs upon the wood.

It was not, perhaps, generally known, at least before the appearance of Miss May Morris's fine

edition of her father's works, published by Messrs. Longman, that many years before the Kelmscott Press was thought of an illustrated edition of "The Earthly Paradise" was in contemplation, and not only were many designs made by Burne-Jones, but a set of them was actually engraved by Morris himself upon wood for the "Cupid and Psyche," though they were never issued to the public.

I have spoken of the movement in art represented by William Morris and his colleagues as really part of a great movement of protest—a crusade against the purely commercial, industrial, and material tendencies of the day.

This protest culminated with William Morris when he espoused the cause of Socialism.

Now some have tried to minimize the Socialism of William Morris, but it was, in the circumstances of his time, the logical and natural outcome of his ideas and opinions, and is in direct relation with his artistic theories and practice.

For a thorough understanding of the conditions of modern manufacture and industrial production, of the ordinary influences which govern the producers of marketable commodities, of wares offered in the name of art, of the condition of worker, and the pressure of competition, he was in a particularly advantageous position.

So far from being a sentimentalist who was content melodiously and pensively to regret that

things were not otherwise, he was driven by contact with the life around him to his economic conclusions. As he said himself, it was art led him to Socialism, not economics, though he confirmed his convictions by economic study.

As an artist, no doubt at first he saw the uglification of the world going on, and the vast industrial and commercial machine grinding the joy and the leisure out of human life as regarded the great mass of humanity. But as an employer he was brought into direct relation with the worker as well as the market and the public, and he became fully convinced that the modern system of production for profit and the world-market, however inevitable as a stage in economic and social evolution, was not only most detrimental to a healthy and spontaneous development of art and to conditions of labour, but that it would be bound, ultimately, by the natural working of economic laws, to devour itself.

Never cramped by poverty in his experiments and in his endeavours to realize his ideals, singularly favoured by fortune in all his undertakings, he could have had no personal reasons on these scores for protesting against the economic and social tendencies and characteristics of his own time. He hated what is called modern civilization and all its works from the first, with a whole heart, and made no secret of it. For all that, he was a shrewd and keen man in his dealings with the world. If he set

its fashions and habits at defiance, and persisted in producing his work to please himself, it was not his fault that his countrymen eagerly sought them and paid lavishly for their possession. A common reproach hurled at Morris has been that he produced costly works for the rich while he professed Socialism. This kind of thing, however, it may be remarked, is not said by those friendly to Socialism, or anxious for the consistency of its advocates—quite the contrary. Such objectors appear to ignore, or to be ignorant of, the fact that according to the quality of the production must be its cost; and that the cheapness of the cheapest things of modern manufacture is generally at the cost of the cheapening of human labour and life, which is a costly kind of cheapness after all.

If anyone cares for good work, a good price must be paid. Under existing conditions possession of such work is only possible to those who can pay the price, but this seems to work out rather as part of an indictment against the present system of production, which Socialists wish to alter.

If a wealthy man were to divest himself of his property and distribute it, he would not bring Socialism any nearer, and his self-sacrifice would hardly benefit the poor at large (except, perhaps, a few individuals), but under the working of the present system his wealth would ultimately enrich the rich —would gravitate to those who *had*, and not to

those who *had not*. The object of Socialism is to win justice, not charity.

A true commonwealth can only be established by a change of feeling, and by the will of the people, deliberately, in the common interest, declaring for common and collective possession of the means of life and of wealth, as against individual property and monopoly. Since the wealth of a country is only produced by common and collective effort, and even the most individual of individualists is dependent for every necessary, comfort, or luxury of life upon the labour of untold crowds of workers, there is no inherent unreasonableness in such a view, or in the advocacy of such a system, which might be proved to be as beneficial, in the higher sense, for the rich as for the poor, as of course it would abolish both. It is quite possible to cling to the contrary opinion, but it should be fully understood that Socialism does not mean "dividing up," and that a man is not necessarily not a Socialist who does not sell all that he has to give to the poor. "A poor widow is gathering nettles to stew for her dinner. A perfumed seigneur lounging in the *œil de bœuf* hath an alchemy whereby he can extract from her every third nettle and call it rent." Thus wrote Carlyle. Men like William Morris would make such alchemy impracticable; but no man can change a social (or unsocial) system by himself, however willing; nor can anyone, however gifted or far-

seeing, get beyond the conditions of his time, or afford to ignore them in the daily conduct of life, although at the same time his life and expressed opinions may all the while count as factors in the evolution by which a new form of society comes about.

Thus much seems due to the memory of a man like William Morris, who was frequently taunted with not doing, as a Socialist, things that, as a Socialist, he did not at all believe in; things, for which, too, one knows perfectly well, his censors, if he had done them, would have been the first to denounce him for a fool.

At all events, it is certain that William Morris spent some of the best years of his life, he gave his time, his voice, his thought, his pen, and much money to put Socialism before his countrymen. This can never be gainsaid. Those who have been accustomed to regard him from this point of view as a dangerous revolutionary might be referred to the writings of John Ball, and Sir Thomas More, his predecessors in England's history, who upheld the claims of labour and simple life, against waste, want, and luxury. Indeed, it might be contended that it was a conservative clinging to the really solid foundations of a happy human life which made Morris a Socialist as much as artistic conviction and study of modern economics. The enormous light which has been recently thrown by historic research upon mediaeval life and condi-

tions of labour, upon the craft guilds, and the position of the craftsman in the Middle Ages—light to which Morris himself in no small degree contributed—must also be counted as a factor in the formation of his opinions.

But whether accounted conservative or revolutionary in social economics and political opinion, there can be no doubt of William Morris's conservatism in another field, important enough in its bearings upon modern life, national and historic sentiment, and education—I mean the protection of Ancient Buildings. He was one of the founders of the society having that object, and remained to the last one of the most energetic members of the committee, and in such important work his architectural knowledge was of course of the greatest value. At a time when, owing to the action of a multitude of causes, the historic buildings of the past are in constant danger, not only from the ravages of time, weather, and neglect, but also, and even to a greater extent, from the zeal of the "restorer," the importance of the work which Morris did with his society—the work which that society carries on—can hardly be overestimated.

The pressure of commercial competition and the struggle for life in our cities—the mere necessity for more room for traffic—the dead weight of vested interest, the market value of a site, the claims of convenience, fashion, ecclesiastical or otherwise, or

sometimes sheer utilitarianism, entirely oblivious of the social value of historic associations of architectural beauty—all are apt to be arrayed at one time or another, or even, perhaps, all combined, against the preservation of an ancient building if it happens to stand in their way.

The variety, too, of the cases in which the difference of the artistic conditions which govern the art and craft of building in the past and in the present is another element which often prevents the defenders and destroyers from meeting on the same plane. It is the old tragic conflict between old and new, but enormously complicated, and with the forces of destruction and innovation tremendously increased.

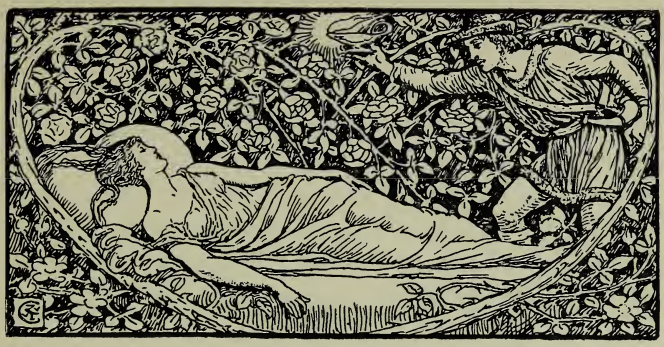
William Morris was a singularly sane and what is called a "level-headed" man. He had the vehemence, on occasion, of a strong nature and powerful physique. He cared greatly for his convictions. Art and life were real to him, and his love of beauty was a passion. His artistic and poetic vision was clear and intense—all the more so, perhaps, for being exclusive on some points. The directness of his nature, as of his speech, might have seemed singularly unmodern to some who prefer to wrap their meaning with many envelopes. He might occasionally have seemed brusque, and even rough; but so does the north wind when it encounters obstacles. Men are judged by the touchstones of personal sympathy

or antipathy; but whether attracted or repelled in such a presence, no one could come away without an impression that he had met a man of strong character and personal force, whether he realized any individual preconception of the poet, the artist, and the craftsman, or not.

He was certainly all these, yet those who only knew him through his works would have but a partial and incomplete idea of his many-sided nature, his practicality, personal force, sense of humour,[1] and all those side-lights which personal acquaintance throws upon the character of a man like William Morris.

[1] It is noteworthy that one who excluded humour from his own work, whether literary, or artistic, had a keen appreciation of it in the work of others. Few who only knew Morris through his poems, romances, and designs would imagine that among his most favourite books were "Huckleberry Finn," by Mark Twain, and "Uncle Remus." I have often heard him recall passages of the first-named book with immense enjoyment of the fun. He was, besides, always an admirer of Dickens.

THE ENGLISH REVIVAL IN DECORATIVE ART



THE ENGLISH REVIVAL IN DECORATIVE ART

THE sense of beauty, like the enchanted princess in the wood, seems liable, both in communities and individuals, to periods of hypnotism. These periods of slumber or suspended animation, are not, however, free from distorted dreams, having a certain tyrannical compulsion which causes those under their influence blindly to accept arbitrary ideas and cast-iron customs as if they were parts of the irreversible order of nature —until the hour of the awakening comes and the household gods of wood and stone, so ignorantly worshipped, are cast from their pedestals.

Such a period of apathetic slumber and of awakening in the arts we have been passing through in England during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and since, side by side with analogous movements in the political and social world.

As regards domestic architecture, the streets of London will illustrate the successive waves of taste or fashion which the past and present century have seen, from the quasi-classical, represented in the Peloponnesus of Regent's Park, to the eclectic Queen Anne-ism of the aesthetic village at Turnham Green; or the more recent developments which have followed newer ideas of town-planning, the modern hotel such as the Savoy or the Piccadilly, or the New Aero Club in Pall Mall, the modern store, such as Selfridge's. Contrast such examples of what one might call our new Imperial Renascence style with the types of simple cottage dwellings in the Garden City at Letchworth, or in the Hampstead garden suburb, and elsewhere; or these again with the larger country mansions some of our best architects are raising in the land. These extremes, with all the various modifications of the outward aspect of the English home—degrees indicating the arc of architectural fashion, as it were —imply a series of corresponding transformations of interiors with all their modern complexities of furniture and decorations.

But the wheat of artistic thought and invention is a good deal encumbered with chaff—the chaff of commerce and of fashion—and it needs some pains to find the real vital germs. To trace the genesis of our English revival we must go back to the days of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and although none of that famous group were decora-

tive designers in the strict sense—unless we except D. G. Rossetti—yet by their resolute and enthusiastic return to the direct symbolism, frank naturalism, and poetic or romantic sentiment of mediaeval art, with the power of modern analysis superadded, and the more profound intellectual study of both nature and art, which the severity of their practice demanded, and last, but not least, their intense love of detail, turned the attention to other branches of design than painting. The very marked character of their pictures, standing out with almost startling effect from among the works of the older Academic School, demanded at least a special architecture in the frames of their pictures, and this led to the practice of painters designing their own frames, at least those who were concerned for unity and decorative effect. Mr. Holman Hunt, for instance, I believe always designed his own frames, as well as some of the ornamental accessories of his pictures—such as the pot for the basil in his "Isabella." D. G. Rossetti the poet-painter, and perhaps the central and inspiring luminary of the remarkable group, evidently cared greatly for decorative effect, and bestowed the utmost pains upon tributary detail, designing the frames to his pictures, the cover and lining for his own poems, and various title-pages. Many of his pictures, too, are remarkable for their beauty and richness of accessory details which give a distinct decorative charm to his work, closely asso-

ciated as they are with its motive and poetic purpose.

The researches of Henry Shaw, and his fine works upon art of the middle ages, first published in the "Forties" by Pickering, and printed by the Chiswick Press, no doubt had their share in directing the attention of artists to the beauty and intention bestowed upon every accessory of daily life in mediaeval times.

Above all influences from the literary side, however, must be placed the work of John Ruskin, an enormously vitalizing and still living force, powerful to awaken thought, and by its kindling enthusiasm to stir the dormant sense of beauty in the minds that come under the spell of his eloquence, which always turns the eyes to some new or unregarded or forgotten beauty in nature or in art. The secret of his powers as a writer on art lies no doubt in the fact that he approached the whole question from the fundamental architectural side, and saw clearly the close connection of artistic development with social life. The whole drift of his teaching is towards sincerity and Gothic freedom in the arts, and is a strong protest against Academic convention and classical coldness.

Among architects, men like Pugin and William Burgess, enthusiasts in the Gothic revival, gave a great deal of care and thought to decorative detail and the design of furniture and accessories. The

latter, in the quaint house which he built for himself in Melbury Road, showed a true Gothic spirit of inventiveness and whimsicality applied to things of everyday use as well as the mural decorator's instinct for symbolism. Since their day Mr. Norman Shaw may almost be said to have carried all before him, and has quite created a type of later Victorian architecture, and his advice is still sought in the design of various buildings and street improvements of modern London. His work, beautiful, well proportioned, and decorative as it often is, however, has not the peculiar character and reserve of the work of Mr. Philip Webb, and the latter is a decorative designer, especially of animals, of remarkable originality and power. His work in architecture and other designs is generally seen in association with that of William Morris in decoration.

The impulse towards Greek and Roman forms in furniture and decoration, which had held sway with designers since the French Revolution, appeared to be dead. The elegant lines and limbs of quasi-classical couches and chairs on which our grandfathers and grandmothers reclined—the former in high coat-collars and the latter in short waists—had grown gouty and clumsy, in the hands of Victorian upholsterers. The carved scrolls and garlands had lost even the attenuated grace they once possessed and a certain feeling for naturalism creeping in made matters worse, and utterly de-

ranged the ornamental design of the period. An illustrated catalogue of the exhibition of 1851 will sufficiently indicate the monstrosities in furniture and decoration which were supposed to be artistic. The last stage of decomposition had been reached, and a period of, perhaps, unexampled hideousness in furniture, dress, and decoration set in which lasted the life of the second empire, and fitly perished with it. Relics of this period I believe are still to be discovered in the cold shade of remote drawing-rooms, and "apartments to let," which take the form of big looking-glasses, and machine-lace curtains, and where the furniture is afflicted with curvature of the spine, and dreary lumps of bronze and ormolu repose on marble slabs at every opportunity, where monstrosities of every kind are encouraged under glass shades, while every species of design-debauchery is indulged in upon carpets, curtains, chintzes and wall-papers, and where the antimacassar is made to cover a multitude of sins. When such ideas of decoration prevailed, having their origin or prototypes, in the vapid splendours of imperial saloons, and had to be reduced to the scale of the ordinary citizen's house and pocket, the thing became absurd as well as hideous. Besides, the cheap curly legs of the *un*easy chairs and couches came off, and the stuffed seats, with a specious show of padded comfort, were delusions and snares. Long ago the old English house-place with its big chimney-corner had given way to the

bourgeois arrangement of dining and drawing-room—even down to the smallest slated hut with a Doric portico. The parlour had become a kind of sanctuary veiled in machine-lace, where the lightness of the curtains was compensated for by the massiveness of their poles, and where Berlin wool-work and bead mats flourished exceedingly.

Enter to such an interior a plain unvarnished rush-bottomed chair from Buckinghamshire, sound in wind and limb—"C'est impossible!" And yet the rush-bottomed chair and the printed cotton of frank design and colour from an unpretending and somewhat inaccessible house in Queen Square may be said to have routed the false ideals, vulgar smartness and stuffiness in domestic furniture and decoration—at least wherever refinement and feeling have been exercised at all.

"Lost in the contemplation of palaces we have forgotten to look about us for a chair," wrote Mr. Charles L. Eastlake in an article which appeared in "The Cornhill Magazine" some time in the "sixties," or early "seventies." The same writer (afterwards Keeper of the National Gallery) brought out "Hints on Household Taste" shortly afterwards, and he, too, was "on the side of the angels" of sense and fitness in these things. The "chair" at any rate was now discovered, if only a rush-bottomed one.

Nowadays it might perhaps be said that the

chair gets more contemplation and attention than the palace, as since then the influence of our old English eighteenth-century furniture designers has been restored, and Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hebblewhite are again held in honour in our interiors, and to judge from the innumerable specimens offered in their name by our furniture dealers the industry of these famous designers must have been prodigious!

The first practical steps towards actually producing things combining use and beauty and thus enabling people so minded to deck their homes after the older and simpler English manner was taken by William Morris and his associates, who founded the house in Queen Square afore-mentioned. Appealing at first only to a limited circle of friends mostly engaged in the arts, the new ideas began to get abroad, the new designs were eagerly seized upon. Morris and Company had to extend their operations, and soon no home with any claim to decorative charm was felt to be complete without its vine and fig-tree so to speak—from Queen Square; and before long a typical Morris room was given to the British Public to dine in at the South Kensington (now the Victoria and Albert) Museum.

The great advantage and charm of the Morrisian method is that it lends itself to either simplicity or to splendour. You might be almost plain enough to please Thoreau, with a rush-bottomed chair,

piece of matting, and oaken trestle-table; or you might have gold and lustre (the choice ware of William de Morgan) gleaming from the sideboard, and jewelled light in your windows, and walls hung with rich arras tapestry.

Of course, a host of imitators appeared, and manufacturers and upholsterers were quick to adapt the more superficial characteristics, watering down the character a good deal for the average taste—that is, the timid taste of the person who has not made up his mind, which may be described as the "wonder-what-so-and-so-will-think-of-it" state—but its effects upon the older ideas of house decoration were definite. Plain painting displaced graining and marbling, frankly but freely conventionalized patterns routed the imitative and nosegay kinds. Leaded and stained glass filled the places which were wont to be filled with the blank despair of ground glass. The white marble mantelpiece turned pale before rich hangings and deep-toned wall-papers, and was dismantled and sent to the churchyard.

These were some of the most marked effects of the adoption of the new, or a return to older and sounder ideas in domestic decoration.

The quiet influence of the superb collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the opportunities of study, open to all, of the most beautiful specimens of mediaeval, renascence, and oriental design and craftsmanship of all kinds must not be forgotten—

an influence which cannot be rated as of too much importance and value, and which has been probably of more far-reaching influence in its effect on designers and craftsman than the more direct efforts of the Art Department to reach them through its school system. By means of this, as is well known, it was sought to improve the taste and culture of artisans by putting within their reach courses of study and exercises in drawing and design, the results of which, it was hoped, carried back into the practice of their various trades and handicrafts, would make them better craftsmen because better draughtsmen. Now, if we were to ask why on the whole the system has not been so fruitful of result in this direction we should find ourselves plunged at once into the deep waters of economic conditions, of the relations of employer and employed, of hours, of wages, of commercial competition, trade unions, and, in fact, should bring the whole Labour question about our ears.

Of course the whole scheme of the schools of design was based upon the idea of improvement *downwards*, and like many modern improvements, or reforms, its contrivers sought to make the tree of art flourish and put forth new leaves without attending to the nourishment of the roots or touching the soil. But the drawing-board and the workshop-bench are after all two very different things, and it is by no means certain that proficiency at one would necessarily produce a corresponding

improvement at the other, except indeed, it be on the principle that if a man acquires one language it will be easier for him to learn others. But at this point another consideration comes in. You get your student seated at his drawing-board, you set him to represent at the point of his pencil or chalk certain objects, casts, for instance, and encourage him to portray their appearance with all relief of light and shade, dwelling solely on the necessity of his attaining a certain degree of purely pictorial skill, which in itself is really of no practical use to a designer of ornament intended to be worked out in some other material such as a textile, wood, or metal. In fact, the development of pictorial skill has a strong tendency to lead the student to devote himself entirely to pictorial work, and hitherto there have been plenty of other inducements, such as the chance of larger monetary reward and social position. If he is not ultimately drawn into the already overcrowded ranks of the picture producers, he is too likely to carry back into his own particular craft a certain love of pictorial treatment and effect which may really be injurious to his sense of fitness in adapting design and material. This indeed is what evidently has happened as the result of much so-called art-education, and we are only now slowly awakening to the conception that art is not necessarily the painting of pictures, but that the most refined artistic feeling may be put into every work of man's hand, and that each

after its kind gives more delight and becomes more and more beautiful in proportion as it follows the laws of its own existence—when a design is in perfect harmony with its material, and one does not feel one would want it reproduced in any other way.

It is next to impossible to get this unity of design and material unless the craftsman fashions the thing he designs, or unless the designer thoroughly understands the conditions and allows them to determine the character of his design, which he can hardly do unless he is in close and constant touch with the craftsman. Now the industrial conditions under which the great mass of things are produced, which have gradually been developed in the interests of trade rather than of art have tended to separate the designer and craftsman more and more and to subdivide their functions. Our enterprising manufacturers are quick enough to adopt or adapt an idea, and some will pay liberally for it, but they do not always realize that it does not follow because *one* good thing is produced in a limited quantity that therefore it must be much better if a cheap imitation of it can be produced by the thousand—but then we no longer produce for *use* but for *profit*. Demand and supply—"thou shalt have no other gods but these," says the trader in effect; although the demand in these days may be as artificial as the supply.

The Nemesis of trade pursues the invention

of the artist, as the steamers on the river on boat-race day pursue, almost as if they would run down, the slender craft of the oarsmen straining every nerve for victory. It is a suggestive spectacle. Someone's brain and hand must set to work—must give the initiative before the steam-engine can be set going. But how many brains and hands, nay lives, has it devoured since our industrial epoch began?

Up to about 1880 artists working independently in decoration were few and far between, mostly isolated units, and their work was often absorbed by various manufacturing firms. About that time, in response to a feeling for more fellowship and opportunity for interchange of ideas on the various branches of their own craft, a few workers in decorative design were gathered together under the roof of the late Mr. Lewis F. Day on a certain January evening known as hurricane Tuesday and a small society was formed for the discussion of various problems in decorative design and kindred topics; meeting in rotation at the houses or studios of the members. The society had a happy if obscure life for several years, and was ultimately absorbed into a larger society of designers, architects, and craftsmen called "The Art Workers' Guild," which met once a month with much the same objects—fellowship and interchange of ideas and papers and demonstrations in various arts and crafts. In fact, since artists more or less concerned

with decoration had increased, owing to the revived activity and demand arising for design of all kinds. The feeling grew stronger among men of very different proclivities for some common ground of meeting. A desire among artists of different crafts to know something of the technicalities of other crafts made itself felt, and the result has been the rapid and continual growth of the Guild which now includes, beside the principal designers in decoration, painters, architects, sculptors, wood-carvers metal-workers, engravers, and representatives of various other crafts.

A junior Art Workers' Guild has also been established in connection with the older body, and there are besides two Societies of Designers in London, while in the provinces there is the Northern Art Workers' Guild at Manchester and various local Arts and Crafts societies all over the country.

We have, of course, our Royal Academy, or as it ought to be called, Royal Guild of Painters in Oil, always with us; but its use of the term "Arts" applies only (and almost exclusively so) to painting, sculpture, architecture, and engraving, and while absorbing gifted artists from time to time, often after they have done their best work, it has never, as a body, shown any wide or comprehensive conception of art, although it has done a certain amount of educational work, chiefly through its valuable exhibitions of old masters

and its lectures and teaching in the schools, which are free, and where famous artists act as visitors. Its influence in the main it is to be feared has been to encourage an enormous overproduction of pictures every year, and to foster in the popular mind the impression that there was no art in England before Sir Joshua Reynolds, and none of any consequence since, outside the easel picture.

The magnificently arranged and deeply interesting "Town-planning Exhibition," held last year in connection with the International Congress on that subject, however, was a new departure and most welcome as an example of what might be done by the Royal Academy under the influence of wider conceptions of art.

Nevertheless, the work of such fine decorative artists as Albert Moore, Alfred Gilbert, Harry Bates has been introduced to the public through the Royal Academy, these two last-named being members; and once upon a time even a picture by Sir E. Burne-Jones appeared there.

Many gifted artists have strengthened the institution since these passed away. The names of Watts and Leighton will always shed lustre and distinction upon it, but of course the Academy necessarily depends for its continued vitality upon new blood. The advantages of membership are generally too strong a temptation to our rising artists to encourage the formation of anything like an English "secession," though

according to our British ideas of the wholesomeness of competition or, let us say *emulation*, a strong body of independent artists might have a good effect all round.

I have often wondered that no attempt has been made by the Royal Academy to give a lead in the arrangement and hanging of an exhibition. With the fine rooms at their disposal it would be possible to make their great annual show of pictures far more striking and attractive by some kind of classification or sympathetic grouping. The best system, of course, would be to group the works of each artist together. This, however, would take up more wall space and lead to more exclusions than at present; but, still the plan might be tried of placing all the portraits together, and, say, the subject pictures according to scale, and the landscapes, arranging them in separate rooms. Sculpture and architecture, and water colours and engravings are already given separate rooms, so that it would only be extending a principle already adopted. The effect of the whole exhibition would be much finer, I venture to think, and also less fatiguing, and there would probably be less chance of pictures being falsified or injured by juxtaposition with unsympathetic neighbours. Surely some advance is possible on eighteenth-century ideas of hanging, or the old days of Somerset House? I respectfully commend the above suggestion to their consideration.

While mentioning names we must not forget (although I have hitherto dwelt rather on the Gothic side of the English revival) such distinguished designers as the late Alfred Stevens and his able followers Godfrey Sykes and Moody. These artists drew their inspiration largely from the work of the Italian Renascence, and it is a testimony to their remarkable powers—especially of the first-named—that they should have achieved such distinction on the lines of so marked a style, and one which, as it appears to me, had already reached its maturity in the country of its birth, unlike Gothic design, which might almost be said to have been arrested in its development by the advent of the Renascence.

Another influence upon modern decorative art cannot be left out of account, and that is the Japanese influence. The extraordinary decorative daring, and intimate naturalism; the frank or delicate colouration, the freshness, as of newly gathered flowers of many of their inventions and combinations: the wonderful vivacity and truth of the designs of such a master as Hokusai, for instance—these and the whole disclosure of the history of their art (which, however, was entirely derived from and inspired by the still finer art of the Chinese), from the early, highly wrought, religious and symbolic designs, up to the vigorous freedom and naturalism of the later time, together

with their extraordinary precision of technique, inevitably took the artistic world by storm. Its immediate effects, much as we may be indebted to such a source, cannot be set down altogether to the good so far as we can trace them in contemporary European art; but perhaps on the whole there is no more definitely marked streak of influence than this of the Japanese. In French art it was at one time more palpable still. In fact it might almost be said to have taken entire possession of French decorative art, or a large part of it; or rather, it is Japanese translated into French with that ease and chic for which our lively neighbours are remarkable.

Whistler, by the way, who must be numbered with the decorators, showed unmistakably in his work the results of a close study of Japanese art. His methods of composition, his arrangements of tones of colour declare how he had absorbed it, and applied it to different methods and subjects, in fact, his work shows most of the qualities of much Japanese art, except precision of drawing, although his earlier etchings have this quality.

In modern decoration, the most obvious and superficial qualities of Japanese art have generally been seized upon, and its general effect has been to loosen the restraining and architectonic sense of balance and fitness, and a definite ordered plan of construction, which are essential in the finest types of design. On the whole, the effects of the dis-

covery of Japanese art on the modern artistic mind, may be likened to a sudden and unexpected access of fortune to an impoverished man. It is certain to disorganize if not demoralize him. The sudden contact with a fresh and vigorous art, alive with potent tradition, yet intimate with the subtler forms and changes of nature, and in the full possession and mastery of its own technique—the sudden contact of such an art with the highly artificial and eclectic art of a complex and effete civilization must be more or less of the nature of a shock. Shocks are said to be good for sound constitutions, but their effect on the unsound are as likely as not to be fatal.

While fully acknowledging the brilliancy of Japanese art, however, one feels how enormously they were indebted to the art of China, and the greater dignity and impressiveness of the latter becomes more and more apparent on comparison. Both in graphic characterization of birds and animals and flowers and splendour of ornament, the Chinese both preceded and excelled the Japanese. There were recently some striking demonstrations of this at the British Museum, when Mr. Laurence Binyon arranged a series of most remarkable ancient Chinese paintings on silk side by side with Japanese work.

The opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, owing to the enterprise of Sir Coutts Lindsay, was the means of bringing the decorative school in

English painting to the front, and did much towards directing public attention in that direction.

What was known as "aestheticism" has, of course, been freely satirized both by press and stage, which latter, however, was not slow to avail itself of some of its results in the increased variety and picturesqueness of its interior scenes, and the charm of delicate harmonies of colour in draperies and costume. The movement was seized upon by the commercial instinct, which always hastens to make hay while the sun shines, and the aesthetic sun shone very gaily for a time, in the society sense. It was somewhat amusing to see the travesties of ideas which had been current in artistic circles for long before, now proclaimed as the new gospel of aesthetic salvation. But in spite of all the clamour, fashionable extravagance, and ridicule, which obscured the real meaning of the movement, so far as it was a sincere search after more beauty in daily life, its influence is just as strong as ever, and is likely to increase with the growth and spread of greater refinement, and the desire for more harmonious social conditions.

Organizations continued to increase and multiply, having for their object, in one way or another, the "encouragement" of the arts and crafts of design, and whether for good or for evil, it cannot be denied that their number and activity were, and are, remarkable signs of the times—of an awakening interest in decorative art and a general impulse

towards ornamental expression. It is true in some instances this impulse runs rather wild, and to some of its ruder results we might even apply the words of the poet Cowper describing the gambols of the kine at high noon:

> Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
> Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent,
> To give act and utt'rance as they may
> To ecstasy, too big to be suppress'd.

It would be difficult to enumerate all the different associations having for their object the teaching, or the spread of a knowledge or love of decorative art and handicraft, outside the big trade organizations and decorating firms, but among those who contributed from various sides to the main stream mention may be made of "The Century Guild," identified chiefly with the publication of its "Hobby Horse," with its careful attention to the printer's art under the fine taste in type and book ornaments of Mr. Herbert P. Horne. "The Home Arts and Industries Association," which has started village classes in various handicrafts all over the kingdom, has held annual exhibitions at the Albert Hall, The Royal School of Art Needlework, now in noble premises in Imperial Institute Road, The School of Art Woodcarving in Pelham Place; while design on the strictly industrial and technical side is cared for by the City and Guilds of London Institute under Sir Philip Magnus.

Since these and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition

Society were established, the London County Council came into being and founded its schools of Art and Craft all over London with the assistance of members of that Society; it has now become the central authority in technical education, and extends a helping hand (with a grant in aid) to some of the schools above named.

All these institutions, and many more, invoke the name of art, and desire to unite good design and workmanship, and also to find a market for it. (Some of our large decorating firms would claim to have the same objects perhaps.) Their great difficulty is how to produce good designing ability out of nothing, as it were. All the crafts which they specially address themselves to teach and cultivate are, after all, entirely dependent for their interest and value upon vigour of design and vital expression, and this cannot suddenly be forced into existence by artificial heat. It is a power of slow development and is nourished from all sorts of sources, and is as many sided as life itself, being in fact only another form of life. You can lead a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink. You can provide any number of words but you cannot make people think, and the possession of rhyming dictionaries will never make a poet, neither will the possession of tools and a method make artists. This is, of course, obvious enough. At the same time it may fairly be urged on the other side that no one can learn to swim without

entering the water, and it is only by repeated experiments and years of patient labour that we arrive at good results.

Genius is always rare, but efficiency is what keeps the world going, and it must be said that admirable work in various crafts has been produced in the London County Council Technical Schools. Their system of scholarships gives opportunities to young people of promise to carry on their studies, and pupils and apprentices in various trades are enabled to gain a more complete knowledge of their craft and its various branches than is possible in any ordinary workshop, as well as tasteful ideas in design generally.

In the summer of 1886 the smouldering discontent which always exists among artists in regard to the Royal Academy, although very often only the result of personal disappointment, threatened to burst into something like a flame. A letter appeared in the leading dailies proposing the establishment of a really National Exhibition of the Arts, which should include not only painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also the arts of design generally. This letter was signed by George Clausen, W. Holman Hunt, and the present writer. The stronghold of the movement at first was among the group of painters, distinguished as the Anglo-French school, whose headquarters were at Chelsea, and who were the founders of the New English Art Club. The idea of such a comprehensive exhibition

was an exciting one, and large and enthusiastic meetings of artists were held. It was however discovered before long that the mass of the painters attracted by the movement intended no more than to press a measure of reform on the Royal Academy —to induce them to take, in fact, a leaf out of the book of the French Salon as regards the mode of election of the hanging committees of each year.

The decorative designers, however, perceiving their vision of a really representative exhibition of contemporary works in all the arts fading away, and the whole force of the movement being wasted in the forlorn hope of forcing reforms upon the Academy, left the agitators in a body, and proceeded to take counsel together as to the best means of furthering their aims, and the immediate result was the founding of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society which, after many difficulties opened its first exhibition at the New Gallery in the autumn of 1888.

The members of the Society, who were also most of them members of the Art Workers' Guild aforementioned, were well aware of the difficulties they would have to face in the endeavour to realize their aims, and carry out their principles. Their main object, however, was to demonstrate by means of a representative public exhibition the actual state of decorative art in all its kinds as far as possible. They desired to assert the claims of the decorative designer and craftsman to the position

of artist, and give every one responsible in any way for the artistic character of a work full individual credit, by giving his name in the catalogue, whether the work was exhibited by a firm or not.

In spite of all drawbacks the richness and artistic interest of the Exhibition was generally acknowledged, and the novelty of the idea attracted the public.

An exhibition of designs and cartoons for decoration had been held by the directors of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1881, but it was limited to that class of work, so that this Arts and Crafts Exhibition may be said to have been really the first which attempted anything like a representative and comprehensive display of not only designs for work but the actual work itself, for its artistic and decorative quality alone. It comprised designs and cartoons, modelled work, woodcarving, furniture, tapestry and embroidery and printed cottons, pottery, tiles, and glass-metal work, jewellery, printed books, binding, calligraphy and illuminations, and undoubtedly included some of the best contemporary work which had been produced in England up to that time. The Exhibition was repeated at the same place the following year, at the same time, and also the year after. Since then, however, the exhibitions of the Society have been held triennially, the latest in January 1910 being the ninth.

It is obvious that exhibitions of this kind involve many more difficulties of organization and manage-

ment than ordinary picture shows. The very fact of having to deal with such a variety of work as was submitted, and the conditions under which work in decoration is generally done (making it difficult for the artist to retain possession of his work for exhibition purposes) make the formation of such an exhibition at all no easy matter. Then there were two open and palpable dangers to be encountered. The danger of being swamped by a great influx of amateur work, as it is generally understood, on the one hand, and the danger of merely commercial work getting the upper hand on the other. To keep

> Along the narrow strip of herbage strown
> That just divides the desert from the sown

was a delicate matter, and it was easy to wander off into the regions on either hand. For in spite the immense activity and industry, the independent artists in design and handicraft were but few, and although many inventive brains and skilled hands might be disguised as "—— and Company," they had to be discovered; the bushel had to be taken away and the light put upon the candlestick of publicity, and this appeared to be a trial to some. It might be thought to be of small importance, this matter of assigning artistic authorship or credit for any part of the work, where it was due; and it may be quite true that when men have reached the point when artistic tradition and social con-

dition both favour a fraternal co-operation in production, they can afford to sink the individual claim to distinction in the collective pride of saying, "This is *our* work." But we have not reached that stage yet, and it seems only common fairness, if individual and artistic responsibility is attached to a work, the credit should go with these, and be assigned in the proper quarter. In these days of commercial competition, and sculptor's "ghosts," it is perhaps hardly surprising that the assertion of such a principle might produce a little consternation, and also in cases of a great multiplicity of cooks it might easily be understood to be embarrassing to distribute properly the individual responsibility for spoiling the broth, and therefore not wonderful that it should in some instances have been shirked altogether.

As another indication of the way the wind was blowing, an Association was formed this same year (1888) for the Advancement of Art in Association with Industry — a somewhat large order. Almost everything and everybody had had their congresses and why not Art? So an Art Congress was arranged to take place at Liverpool in December of that year. It was properly divided into sections for the separate discussion of painting, architecture, sculpture, and decorative or applied art, as the phrase goes. It may be mentioned here that the Society of Arts had before this formed a special committee to arrange for lectures and discussions

on "The Applied Arts," and had also offered prizes to art-workmen for excellence in various departments of handicraft, and had held a small exhibition of such works in their rooms in the Adelphi. Well, the Congress at Liverpool duly met, and every one having a particular axe to grind brought it to the common grindstone of public discussion. It was a fairly representative parliament. The royal academician sat down with the socialist; the scientific colour theorist fed with the practical decorator; the industrial villager faced the manufacturer; the art critic and the painter mingled their tears, and all were led to the pasture by a gentle Fine Art professor. Some home truths were spoken and there were many interesting papers and discussions, but whether we were really nearer solving the problem how to bring about the marriage of Art and Industry is doubtful, though the Association had another campaign at Edinburgh the following year and one since at Birmingham. Association and discussion among people of common interests is of course good, but Art is a subject by its very nature difficult to deal with in words, although perhaps more is said about it in these days than almost any other subject —and here am I still adding to the sum!

A hair perhaps divides the false and true.

We have no word-symbols for defining those delicate shades of difference so important to the

artist, and to be perpetually qualifying is fatigueing. It is useful to consider art in its relation to life; to consider how it is affected by economic conditions, to study its history and influence, and the lives of its workers. One can even proceed a certain distance with general principles, but finally we must get down to the solid ground of practice to solve its real problems.

All these movements may be but fluttering leaves in the wind, but at least they serve to show its direction. The colours of spring sometimes resemble those of autumn; but the former are distinguished by a certain daintiness and delicacy: a soft bloom of silver and russet comes over the woods before the cloud-like green drapes them for the coming summer. When we see delicate and harmonious dyes and patterns in the fabrics of the windows of commerce, when we see dainty gowns in the street, expressing the fair forms of their wearers with the grace of flowers; when we see a certain sense of relation and harmony of tint in the most ordinary arrangements of paint and paper in the interiors of our houses: when our chairs and couches not unfrequently show lines of good breeding; when we find books on the table which have been considered by their printers and designers as works of art as well as of literature, and thus give a double pleasure, since they satisfy more than one of the senses—well, we begin to think that something has happened

to us; some new spirit has breathed upon the land, that such refinements should be possible to the moderate citizen, remembering that such things but a few years ago could not be had for love or money. We might still be happy were it not for the whirlwind of trade, and the whirligig of fashion which occasionally seem to coquette with art, as a child plays with a toy, but soon turn away to continue their mad chase after a supposititious "novelty." Happily they leave some quiet corners unswept, as they have always done, or we could never have known what the homes of our ancestors were like. But how many still does England hold of those delightful places full of the pathos of old time, where each dumb thing of wood or iron, or copper, each fragment of faded tapestry seems to have the speech of romance.

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

When the utilitarian would destroy such relics for the sake of "modern improvements" we do not realize what priceless things we lose. We can only realize it when we live for a time in country or city without antiquity of any sort. Here in England there are still many places where one might have the suggestion that we moderns were like children playing with new toys in front of a rich tapestried background full of great deeds and romances. In America the idea could not occur, and the absence of such suggestion is no doubt

much felt by the more cultured and thoughtful, especially after visiting Europe. It may partly account, too, for the more fantastic character in the architecture of some of their recent country dwellings, which are full of nooks and corners and odd gables and stairways, as if their designer wished to make up by his invention for the absence of old time sentiment.

Some of us appear to be trying to turn England into another America—for ever scheming railways where they are not wanted, cutting down trees, and clearing away old dwelling places, and insulting even the green fields with advertisements. Anything that interferes with extra percentages is as dust in the balance to such.

In the destruction of beauty of any kind, however, is involved the destruction of the faculty of its perception and appreciation. The artistic capacity and sense of beauty must be fed by the contemplation of beauty or both will in time perish. We cannot really satisfy one of the senses unless we satisfy them all. It is often said, "you must sacrifice this or that to comfort and convenience;" but it is quite possible to have every so-called comfort and convenience, and yet to be anything but happy or comfortable—especially if the comfort of the eye is forgotten. Unless the utilitarian succeeds in eliminating the sense of beauty and art altogether, the natural man will still revolt against the tyranny of mechanical and artificial

conditions. Such revolts make epochs, and when the human mind is deeply stirred it is sure sooner or later to find expression in some revival, or new form of art.

A great intellectual revolution has taken place in the last half century: a great social and industrial revolution is preparing, or even now progressing. Whether art will again be able to sum up and express adequately in monumental form the new life and its aspirations, as it expressed the heart of ancient life in Greece and mediaeval Europe, must depend upon its power of appeal, and this again must depend upon the sensitiveness to form and colour on the part of the people. In England the domestic sentiment is so strong that enthusiasm for large public works is rare, and opportunities for sculptor or painter to express anything like the generic thought of their time, or to touch the pride or hopes of the nation rarer still.[1] The art that is capable of illustrating this spirit is what is called decorative art: but the art which can cover large mural spaces with a peoples' history and legend in noble and typical forms, the

[1] It is true we have our frescoes of English history at the Houses of Parliament, but they cannot be said, with the exception of the work of Mr. G. F. Watts, to have been conceived in an epic spirit, but are rather anecdotic or incidental. Though the new pictures for the House of Lords by some of our ablest men of the younger school, such as Mr. Payne and Mr. Cadogan Cooper, show much finer mural and decorative feeling.

art which can lift our souls with large thoughts, or enchant them with a sense of mystery and romance, can also be a familiar friend at our firesides, and touch each common thing of every day use with beauty, weaving its golden threads into the joys and sorrows of common life, and making happy both young and old.

THE SOCIALIST IDEAL AS A NEW INSPIRATION IN ART

THE SOCIALIST IDEAL AS A NEW INSPIRATION IN ART

ART as the commentator or the recorder of human life, reflecting not only its physical aspects but its mental attitude, must necessarily be influenced by every change which modifies the course and character of that life. It is the sensitive plate in the camera of the mind of the age which receives every image, every shadow which passes before the lens of its vision, and, over and above the fleeting shows of the hour, registers the prevailing sentiment of its period.

In proof of this we have only to look around us and see how intimately the life and spirit of our own times are represented in the art of the day, more especially pictorial art.

In any of our large annual popular mixed picture shows we may see the effects of the modern commercial principle of individual competition.

Pictures of the utmost diversity of subject and treatment are crowded together, clamorous for attention, often injured by the juxtaposition of unsympathetic neighbours, the principal quality telling in such a conflict being force. Certain dominant, or privileged, individuals hold front places, but even the marked individual style of some leading painters is apt to be discounted by numerous more or less successful imitations.

Painters are said to be extreme individualists as a rule, and while, no doubt, the economic conditions of the day tend to encourage this, and to make painting more and more a matter of personal expression or impression, yet, I think, the individuality of modern artists is more apparent than real, and that it would not be difficult to classify them in types, or to trace the main influences in their work to some well-known artistic source either in the present or the past, or both. This, however, would be in no way to their discredit, but it shows how art, even in its most individualistic forms, is essentially a social product, and that each artist benefits enormously by the work of his contemporaries and his predecessors.

Our mixed picture exhibition also discloses another prominent characteristic of our time—the domination of money, and the influence of the possessing classes and material wealth. This appears in the preponderance of portraits and the comparative absence of imaginative works.

We may see the monarch and the political, financial, or commercial magnate in all their glory; generals and admirals, slayers and destroyers, in scarlet and blue and gold; the fashionable dame in purple and fine linen; the motorist in his career; national pride or imperialism is appealed to by pictures of battle and triumph over inferior races; and sports and pastimes, especially those involving the pursuit and death of birds and animals.

Nor is the reverse of the medal unrepresented, for we may see side by side with brilliant ballroom scenes and banquets in marble halls, as a picturesque contrast or foil perhaps, various aspects of poverty and rags, sometimes sincere, sometimes sentimental, and occasionally flashes of insight reveal the pathos of the toiler's lot in the field, the factory, or on the treacherous ocean.

The genuine modern love of wild nature and landscape, and the roaming spirit of travel is generally catered for by our painters; in these directions, perhaps, may be detected the suppressed sigh of super-civilized man for primitive freedom and natural conditions of life, or,

> The devotion to something afar
> From the sphere of our sorrow.

With such mixed elements we may find some false sentiment, and also sensationalism, not in-

frequently connected with Christian sentimentality, and amid a fair allowance of military exploits, and flag-waving imperialism, there may be a few well-staged masquerades of past history, some grim and stark realism, perhaps, or gloomy pictorial pessimism, and for the rest, decorative or amatory posings, painted anecdotes and domesticities, flowers, babies, and bric-à-brac.

Thus, in pictorial form, with more or less completeness, the mixed drama of our age is presented, its very discords even, and the absence of any prevailing idea or unity of sentiment (except bourgeois) and artistic aim is characteristic, as the pictures jostle one another in a competitive crowd, each struggling for a share of attention.

Painters of the Latin and the Teutonic races are more dramatic, and also more daring in their conceptions, and often appear to strip the mask (or the fig-leaf) from objects and subjects which the more timid or prudish Anglo-Saxon would discreetly veil. Grim pictures of the industrial war not unfrequently appear in Italian and French salons, and in that of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts I have seen large and lurid canvases depicting strikers on the march with a background of factory chimneys looming through the smoke. Apart from their economic and historical significance, however, such subjects may fall in with a certain mood of gloom and pessimism which, in violent reaction from superficial grace and beauty,

and classical tradition, manifests itself in some quarters. Now and again a new sensation is made by some eccentric genius, as it were, dragging a weird aesthetic red herring across the fashionable artistic scent, and diverting attention to side tracks in artistic development, often mixed with morbidity, or, as a change from the pursuit of superficial and ephemeral types of beauty, debased and revolting types and loathly subjects are drawn under the pictorial limelight and analysed.

So, in the pictorial world, the economic system under which we live makes itself felt by encouraging each artist to fight for his own hand, and to become a specialist of one sort or another, unless he can live by exploiting some other artist's discovery and method.

Few, probably, among artists are fully conscious of this compulsion, or, at least, of its cause, and but few trouble themselves about the economic system, but mostly, though not without social sympathies, take the risks, as individuals, of swimming or sinking, with the off chance of fortune and fame, as in the necessary order (or disorder) of things.

Yet the economic position of the modern artist can hardly be considered as at all satisfactory, dependent as he is mainly upon the caprice of the rich, or the control of the dealer, and upon the surplus value and unearned increment it may

be in the power of individuals to spend upon art.

Painting, however, though the most individual, popular, vivid, and intimate of the arts, is not the *only* art, and the arts, like humanity, do not flourish under Imperial rule. They are a brotherhood or a sisterhood (they are traditionally represented as the latter) though, in neither case are they necessarily celibate; on the contrary, for it is by the union of art with a human character and personality that living offspring are produced.

From the point of view of the necessities of the community (and amongst these necessities I would certainly count beauty of environment) the constructive arts come first in order.

Man needs shelter and security, and therefore architecture and the craft of building take the first place, since without roof and walls it would be difficult to enjoy the other arts which minister to our comfort, refinement, and pleasure (nor would it be hardly possible for many of them to exist) unless we could satisfy our aesthetic predilections by textiles and a tent, or by painting or chiselling the walls of a cave.

Now architecture or the art of building is essentially a co-operative art. The planning and general scheme of the design of a building may indeed emanate from one mind, but its realization needs an army of skilled artificers and artists—stonemasons, carvers, carpenters, smiths, tilers and

plasterers, and a host of labourers working harmoniously together. And yet, in order to make the building really expressive—a work of art, in short—something more than training and manual skill, something above learned tradition, and beyond even organized co-operative labour is wanted.

What, then, is this something—this unknown quantity or quality?

What makes the great difference between ancient and modern architecture, we might ask, for it is in the answer to this question that we find the answer to our first?

Unity of sentiment—the inspiration of a great ideal, this it was which enabled the artists and craftsmen of past great periods in art to work in harmony on great public monuments, but without losing their character or individuality, as the different parts of the work might be full of invention and variety, and yet conduce to a harmonious whole, as in a Gothic cathedral.

Mr. Halsey Ricardo, in an interesting address recently given to the Architectural Association of London, aptly described the architecture of Ancient Egypt as "priest's architecture"; that of Ancient Assyria as "the architecture of kings"; the architecture of Greece he considered as "sculptor's architecture," and that of the revived classicism of the Renascence as "the architecture of scholars." Well, these have all had their day. The turn of the people must come, and in the

architecture of the future, under the inspiration of the great Socialist Ideal we may realize what may be described as the architecture of humanity.

And, looking to the probable requirements of a co-operative commonwealth, this hope seems to be well founded in view of the likelihood of the construction of collective dwellings (already projected in the garden city) of noble public halls and schools.

The unifying effect of a great Ideal, a Hope, a Faith, is obviously wanting generally in modern architecture, wherein the influence most paramount is too often the limits of the builders' contract.

The golden image (which yet is never, like Nebuchadnezzar's, actually "set up") is the real god bowed down to, whosesoever the image and superscription over the porchway, and so modern art is everywhere tied to the purse strings.

But the money-bag makes a poor device for an escutcheon, and is still less effective as an inspirer in art. The standard of the man in possession is "market value," and art under capitalism has become mostly a kind of personal and often portable property, and as much a matter for speculative investment as stocks and shares.

As money cannot write history or ancestry, every portable bit of antiquity is now in danger of being bought up by dealers for the use of millionaires, and we shall soon have no visible history but in our museums.

But, above the din of the market and the confusion of political tongues, a clarion call is heard, and through the darkness breaks a new dawn.

The Socialist Ideal comes, scattering the clouds of pessimism and decadence which have lain heavily on the spirit of modern art.

Artists have already been touched by the stress and stir of the struggle of Labour and the pathos of the life of the toiler, who, as a patient Atlas, sustains the earthy heaven of wealth and luxury. In contact with the earth again, and in sympathy with the life of the people, many painters have found inspiration.

One of the greatest of modern sculptors—Meunier, the Belgian (alas! now no more) was himself a Socialist, and devoted himself to the study and realization of types of heroic labour—the labour that takes its life in its hand in every ordinary day's work—at the furnace mouth or in the coal mine. A group of his figures and reliefs forms a noble epic in bronze of the modern toiler.

François Millet may be said to have painted the epic of the French agricultural labourer, though not, apparently, from any conscious or revolutionary point of view, but rather as a sympathetic observer recording its pathos.

Much in the same spirit Joseph Israels in Holland, and Liebermann in Germany, have painted aspects of the worker's life.

Many of our island painters from a similar

standpoint have painted the English workers—such as George Clausen, H. H. Le Thangue, Frank Brangwyn, Stanhope Forbes, H. S. Tuke, Prof. Frederick Brown, the late Charles Furse, and the late F. Madox Brown—and shown us the toilers of the sea and land, and the nameless heroes of the life-boat, and the tragedies of the fishing village.

The aspects of labour under modern conditions, indeed, have a deep significance, more, perhaps, than the artist or the labourer, unconscious of Socialism, is probably aware of.

To the artist it is always invigorating to get down to the roots of life, and draw fresh inspiration from the simple life of simple people meeting nature face to face every day of their lives.

The representation of types and aspects of modern labour, however, may or may not always be an indication of the effect of Socialist sympathies or the inspiration of the Socialist Ideal, and in any case it only exhibits one phase of such sympathy. But the Socialist ideal has undoubtedly had a great influence in another direction, namely, in what are generally known as the "Arts and Crafts"; and it is not a little remarkable that the modern revival in Design and Handicraft may claim manufacturing and individualistic England as its birthplace.

This fact has been freely and generously acknowledged by our Continental brethren.

The perception of the essentially social character of the arts that minister to daily life, and the dependence of Design and Handicraft upon effective and sympathetic co-operation among groups of workers have drawn craftsmen together, and has led in some sort to a revival of guilds. Some of these guilds, like the Art Workers' Guild (founded as long ago as 1884) are for discussion of a demonstration in the various artistic handicrafts, and for mutual information and help.

The influence of such guilds in the revival of many beautiful crafts on sound lines, and, above all, in imbuing artists of different crafts with a sense of the unity of art can hardly be overestimated.

Other guilds, groups of workers, and industrial associations have been formed in many parts of the country for the practice of the handicrafts, influenced by the teaching of John Ruskin and William Morris. Others, again, are hardly more than commercial enterprises, but all endeavour to meet in one way or another the increasing public interest in hand-work.

This English movement of the last twenty-five or thirty years or so is usually traced to the workshop of William Morris, who, with a group of distinguished artists, represented the advanced school in English art at that time, founded the firm which still bears his name some time in the

sixties, mainly, at first, to supply artists and people of refined taste with simple furniture and domestic decoration that they could live with.

Morris, who became so conspicuous an instance later, of the influence of the Socialist Ideal, was not then a conscious Socialist, though he was from the first in constant protest against the false taste and pretentiousness of modern decorative art, which had sunk to a very commercial and common-place level under mid-nineteenth century industrial conditions, controlled by division of labour and the machine.

The fact that he was a poet and a man of letters as well as an artist gave additional force to his revolution in English taste, and increased his influence very much, while his own position as an employer, and man of business brought him face to face with the conditions of labour and modern industry. Although in his own work and the work he controlled he was highly successful, and by the vigour and beauty of his designs, under mediaeval influence, especially in woven stuffs and wall coverings, he quite turned the tide of taste, he abandoned hope that there could be any real or lasting improvement in the arts under the existing economic and social conditions, and he did not seem to share in the belief which has animated some of his friends and followers, that the Arts and Crafts movement itself would prove a means of revolutionizing methods of production

and carrying on an effective propaganda for Socialism.

The next step forward was made by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society which was founded in 1888 by a group of artists which included architects, painters, sculptors, as well as designers and craftsmen of different kinds.

The society arose from the ruins of a sort of secessionist movement of painters against the Royal Academy and its narrow views of art and exclusiveness. Among its members were men of very different ideas, but with these were several fully convinced and conscious Socialists, strongly imbued with Morris's ideals, though Morris himself did not at first join us, the present writer being elected as first president and serving in that office for the first three years of the society's existence, when Morris was elected to the chair and served till his death in 1896.

Our main and ostensible purpose was to advance the state of the decorative arts by uniting design and handicraft, and by acknowledging the share and artistic responsibility of the individual workmen who co-operated in the production of a work of art, also to give opportunities to designers and craftsmen to exhibit their work and appeal directly to the public, and by holding selected exhibitions of design and handicraft from time to time to maintain a standard of taste and workmanship which hitherto there had been no means of doing.

Courses of lectures on the arts by members of the society accompanied our earlier exhibitions, and these have since been published, and by such means our propaganda was greatly extended.

If we cannot claim to have solved the Labour question, which, of course, nothing short of a Socialist system can do, we have asserted the claims of decorative and industrial art and of the craftsman, and we have enabled a body of artistic craftsmen to appeal direct to the public, while many of our members through teaching bodies, such as the Board of Education and the County Councils have been the means of inculcating sound traditions of workmanship among large numbers of young students and apprentices from various trades who go to study in the evening schools, and so carry back into their ordinary work fresh ideas and enhanced skill and taste.

The influence of the Arts and Crafts movement has certainly been socialistic in increasing the respect for workmanship, and in awakening the sense of the public to the need of humane and healthful conditions for the workers, over and above the inculcation of the desire for beauty in common things, and harmonious surroundings of a refined if simple life.

Its quiet methods still serve indirectly the propaganda of the Socialist Ideal.

Only recently, for instance, an exhibition was organized in London of the work of various

Guilds of Handicraft, by a lady on the staff of a well-known Socialist weekly journal, which demonstrated on the one hand the joy in art and handicraft under happy and fair conditions for the worker, and on the other showed the conditions of "sweated" labour by living examples working at their miserably paid trades.

A river gathers volume by the contributions of the small streams which flow into it, and so with the great movement of Socialism, which, comprehending as it does, the whole range of human effort and aspiration, is continually widening and increasing in depth and force, not only by the direct action of its leaders, and the support of its conscious followers, but in many indirect ways. The sum of which it would be difficult to estimate though every influence counts, and even the very opposition of enemies often has the contrary effect to that intended by them, and not only so, but as we may observe in the political arena these are sometimes driven to defend their position by borrowing palliative weapons from the armoury of those they profess bitterly to oppose.

The forms which art will take when Socialism is actually established will probably be very different from those which herald its advent. The consideration of such a large subject involves much speculation, but from the analogy of the inspiring influence of the ancient religions which have held sway over mankind, and which, con-

trolling the whole of human life, focussed the most beautiful art upon its mysteries and beatitudes, and drew both the senses and the intellect of man into their service, we cannot but believe that the feeling of the solidarity of humanity, and all that it implies, which would dominate all social thought and conduct in a collective socialized community, would become a religion, when its full significance and its bearing on every department of life was fully realized; but a religion free from the shadow of degrading superstitions, and from the taint of asceticism, and under which there would be no shirking of either the work or the enjoyment of the earth—a religion whose highest sanction would be human happiness, and in which its votaries would discover not only a sound rule of conduct for every-day life, but an inspiring ideal to lead the spirit ever onwards.

Human history would acquire a new significance in the mind of the poet and the artist, as they beheld, in the long course of evolution, the race in a vast procession emerging from the mists of primaeval time; from its early struggles with wild nature; from the gens and the tribal state, finding safety in primitive communism, and in that state beholding the invention of the essential fundamental necessities and appliances, such as the spade, the plough, and the wheel, the spinning and weaving of cloth, pottery, and the birth of song and art.

From the tragic vicissitudes of history, of race-conflict, of conquest and domination of warlike tribes and the institution of slavery, the foundation and influence of the great ancient states and empires, and their inevitable decay and fall, and the new order springing from their ruins; the tragic tale of wars and pestilence and famine, of flood and of fire and of earthquake, and yet onward still through all these perils and disasters we may see humanity marching beneath the banner of social justice to fulfil its destiny; the hero spirits still passing the torch of enlightenment and freedom from hand to hand, and as one sinks into the silence another advances towards the full flush of the new morning.

Transfigured in that new light may we not see a recreated earth, and her children set free from the bondage of gold whether of spirit or of body —the race of man entering into its inheritance at last, having triumphed over the worst and most insidious of all the despotisms that have ever dominated the earth—Capitalism.

Then under the collective control of the means of existence, when none shall be crippled or stunted by want, or degraded by forced or unhealthy labour, what a different thing life will mean to the people. The cloud of care and anxiety to secure a bare subsistence which now darkens the spirit of millions shall be lifted, as well as its inverted reflection in the parsimonious spirit of

some who have never known want, and all the sordid ingenuity, toil, scheming, craft, and trouble to win a lucky throw in the commercial speculative gamble will pass away, and we may begin to live.

The whole noxious and squalid brood of vices and crimes connected with the individual possession of riches, or the desire for them, or the want of them, being swept away, we may begin to understand the possibilities of life upon this earth, in so far as they may be in the collective power of man. With all the resources of science, and the potential glories of art in our hands, with unprecedented control over the forces of nature, and in full knowledge of the essentials of health, these being all dedicated to the service of the whole community, who would thus be in possession of the elements and materials for a full and happy human life, surely we shall find new and abundant inspiration for art, and constant social use and demand for its powers.

In depicting the story of man, and the drama of life; in great public monuments; in commemoration of the past, in the education of the present; in the adorning of domestic and public buildings and places; in the accompaniments of great festivals, processions, and celebrations—in such directions, surely, we shall find the widest possible field for the exercise of all the capacities of art-architecture, painting, sculpture and the arts of design and handicraft, with music and poesy, as

in the fullness of communal life we shall possess the materials for building and maintaining fair cities, and dwelling places surpassing in beauty anything that the history of the world has yet recorded, since their foundations will rest upon the welfare of the whole people.

ON THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF ART

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VARIOUS views of an artist's life, and motives for following art are apt to present themselves to those on the threshold of the vast field of its study, but these after all may mostly be summed up in one of the two governing reasons, which may be expressed as follows:

1. The pure love of art.
2. The sake of a livelihood.

(A third, *for pastime*, sometimes comes in, but may be dismissed as art cannot be studied to any purpose except in a serious spirit.)

In practice it generally comes about that these first two have to be reconciled in some way, and it becomes a pressing question sooner or later as to *how* to do so, though it is always well to remember that there is no *natural* connection between love and money in the arts and, indeed, it would be better if all work could be inspired by and done for love. At the same time, under present economic arrangements, the labourer is at least worthy of his hire; and it might also be said that when poverty comes in at the door art—if not love—is apt (though not always) to fly out of the window.

The same sequence sometimes happens also with the sudden advent of riches, which also has a way of throwing domestic arrangements out of harmony, so that here, as in other cases, extremes meet, and *too much* may be as bad as *not enough* in its effects upon art.

To paint great masterpieces and make fame and fortune is an ambition given to few to realize. The masterpiece at all events must be a labour of love, whether fame or fortune follow or not, and in the history of art it has happened over and over again that masterpieces have not been instantly recognized, and the master usually has had to wait for recognition and reward—if that can be said in any real sense to lie outside the accomplishment of his work. Good art, like virtue, is its own reward. Yet, as a financial character remarks, in a play of Mr. George Moore's, "Man cannot live by virtue alone." Virtue itself indeed requires appropriate conditions for its development and sustenance, just as the artist requires support and sympathy.

The warm breath of appreciation will draw up the sap of creative impulse and it will put forth bud and leaf, blossom and fruit.

This potentiality for art, exists in a rudimentary way though in very varying degrees in perhaps all individuals, but as a general rule skill and facility are only acquired at the price of constant devotion, a devotion spontaneous and sincere. Even great

gifts and natural or inherited adaptability require to be strengthened and made supple by study and constant practice and observation. I have alluded to the importance of a sympathetic atmosphere, and it sometimes happens that the germ of artistic impulse has to struggle with adverse circumstances, and it becomes a question of its strength and endurance whether it will survive till more favourable opportunities for its development arrive.

Where from the earliest the student has been surrounded by the tools and implements of art, when he has seen it progressing before his eyes, the gain is enormous over those who take up their studies late, and to whom the world of art is comparatively mysterious and strange. The mere imitative impulse, which appears to be possessed in common by all mankind in a certain degree, will in the first instance gain a certain ease and facility of hand in dealing with tools—say pencil, brush and colour, which itself is a very great advantage to begin with. In fact, the first consideration in studying art is *facility of hand.* Without it, really nothing can be done since the power of expression is so much dependent upon it.

In this connection I was much struck, while in America, with a method adopted by a teacher (Mr. Liberty Tadd)[1] in Philadelphia, a city in

[1] Mr. Liberty Tadd has since developed his system and has embodied his teaching in a large and fully illustrated work—"New Methods in Education." He has visited this country

which very great attention was being paid to all forms of technical instruction. Well, this teacher did not profess to train artists at all. His object was to give *facility of hand*. He took children of various ages—quite young to begin with—from the ordinary primary schools, and set them to draw on the black board with a piece of chalk in each hand certain figures. Circles to begin with, and certain symmetric forms of ornament as shown in the diagram. The facility they acquired was extraordinary. He then set them to what he called "memorize" these forms and combine them in design as they best could, and to model such designs in clay, and to carve them in wood.

Well, it struck me this might be capable of development. At any rate, clearly, facility of hand could be developed by exercise, just as muscular strength can be.

From such simple exercises a student might advance, and those who developed more faculty or taste in certain directions rather than others—say in modelling rather than drawing, or in carving—might pursue further those particular branches, making them main studies to which other side studies would contribute. The use of colour, and

and given lectures in exposition of his method, a part of which is known as bi-manual training, or ambidexterity, upon which there is an interesting book by Mr. John Jackson, F.E.I.S., with an introduction by Major-General R. S. S. Baden-Powell, C.B., published by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench and Co.

PROGRESSIVE BLACKBOARD PRACTICE IN BI-MANUAL TRAINING.
(From "New Methods in Education," by Liberty Tadd).

the habit of working directly on the paper with the brush, like the Japanese, would again give enormous facility and precision of touch, of great value both to the designer of patterns and also to the pictorial artist. The direct brush method has been, since this was first written, practised in our schools, often with surprising results indicating considerable design faculty in young children. Method is so much a question of habit, and in so many departments of design precision of touch and directness of execution are of such importance—in the preparation of working designs for cotton printing for instance. The india-rubber, I am inclined to think, sometimes is the root (or the sap) of all evil.

It is for this quality of precision and technical adaptability to the conditions of manufacture which has, I believe, induced many manufacturers to seek their designs and working drawings on the continent. From the specimens I have seen however, I cannot say I am impressed with the originality or fertility of the designs, and when, too—though I am by no means of the Jingo persuasion—it came to getting your British lion designed abroad, unicorn and all the rest of the national heraldry, it seemed rather a *reductio ad absurdum*. Yet after all, of course, we must concede morally our French or German brother has as much right to life as we. Competitive commerce certainly is no respecter of nationality. We must all take our

chance in the world market nowadays. We are all chained to the conqueror's car. We want a new Petrarch to write the triumph of commercialism, and a new designer to picture it, as the old triumphs are depicted with every splendour of inventive accessory, and magnificence of decorative effect in those Burgundian tapestries at Hampton Court and South Kensington. Well, I am afraid the modern triumph, such as it is, is pictured for us in the rampant poster, which pursues us in and out of stations, up and down streets, and even along the railway lines, which last vantage ground hitherto has been the prerogative of our American cousins. I do not say the poster has no place in art, and many very able artists have designed posters, and, on the whole, our free popular exhibitions on the hoardings have gained both in interest and printing skill, and decorative effect of late years. Under considerable restraint and chastening it might be possible to make the announcement of useful wares and theatrical events at least inoffensive, perhaps, and it may be that the mere working of competition will produce a demand for more refined productions, since when all shout together no one voice is likely to be heard, and the accepted theory of a poster is that it *must* shout—but let us keep it out of our scenery. Any way the subject is important since our hoardings are evidently the most obviously public education in pictorial and typographical design. It is, after all,

what meets our eyes every day that influences us. It is the surrounding—the set scene of every-day life that affects our artistic sense more than anything. While a visit to a museum or art gallery is only an occasional matter, except for students, the mass of mankind must take their impressions of colour and form from what they see around them.

It is, we know, the persistence and aggregation of small causes that have played the chief part in the modelling of the earth as we see it, and which are continually changing its aspect. In like manner the general sense or sensitiveness to beauty is acted upon unconsciously, I have no doubt, by the aspects of every-day life, by the colours and forms of the street and the market as well as by the pictures and furniture of our domestic interiors. If this theory is correct, it follows that anything which impairs that sensitiveness must injure the faculty of its appreciation and production.

We have been too careless in this matter, and constant toleration and familiarity with hideous surroundings brutalizes and blunts the perceptions, and seeing how largely ugliness of form and colour prevails in at least the externals of modern life, especially of our manufacturing centres, it is perhaps not surprising that a certain cult, a certain worship of the ugly should have obtained a footing even in art.

I do not deny there are certain tragic aspects of industrialism, a certain weird fascination in drift-

ing clouds of smoke, and beauty in the forms of escaping steam, and that graphic representations of the various restless aspects of modern life, have, in proportion to their sincerity, historic value. It is at all events *our* life and must be recorded, though it leads to the art of the newspaper—but a great deal of clever art can be put into a newspaper. Our newspapers are perhaps getting the better of us; like Chronos the press devours its own children, and no one knows how many geniuses are yearly swallowed up, or how many lives and talents consumed in order that the comfortable world shall have its dish of news and views at the breakfast table, as well as in successive relays, served up like muffins, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the electric light. Well, Art, like literature, may be said to be divided into prose, poetry, and penny-a-lining, or, to find equivalents we might say, the creative, the pictorial, and the pot-boiling kinds. The first two are governed by their own laws and the individual preferences of the artist, the third depends upon fashion, the state of the markets, averages and the laws of supply and demand.

Now it seems quite possible in an artistic life, while preserving an ideal of beauty of design and workmanship in whatever direction without sacrifice of principle, to remain in touch with the ordinary wants of humanity—to realize that that art is not necessarily the highest which

is always in the clouds, but, indeed, that all kinds of art gain in character and beauty in proportion as the ideas they express are incarnate as it were—inseparable from the particular materials in which they are embodied. Their peculiar conditions and limitations openly and frankly acknowledged, and so far from being felt in the nature of a bondage, really are aids to distinct and beautiful decoration, as is the case in all the arts and crafts of design, showing that sincerity is the fundamental condition of good design and workmanship. which never pride themselves on imitating qualities which properly belong to other forms of art and other materials.

There are two systems, or methods, or principles of education in art.

i. The Academic or absolute.

ii. The Experimental, or relative, and adaptive.

The one teaching art or design in the abstract on certain cut-and-dried principles and methods, and fixed canons and standards, passing every mind through the same mill, without special reference to any particular conditions of craftsmanship or individual preference.

The other teaching design in concrete forms and in direct relation to tools, methods and materials, with the object of calling out the individual feeling and setting it free to express itself under the natural limitations of art in its own way.

The latter is the method of our new technical and

Arts and Crafts schools, so that a student may really acquire a practical working knowledge of the peculiar requirements of design to be reproduced in any process of manufacture, instead of being launched on the world with vague general ideas of drawing and painting, but ignorant of how to apply them.

It of course remains to be proved how far technical schools can really efficiently take the place of the old workshop training under the apprenticeship system, which led to good results in the past, but while one must of course recognize that changed times require new methods, we ought also clearly to realize that efficiency in the use of tools and materials, and adaptability to materials, with the view of bearing on the prosperity of trade and supplying manufacturers with more highly skilled designers and workmen, with increased competition, go to form *one* aim and ultimate object. Quite another is the like efficiency, governed by the fresh creative impulse of artists and craftsman taking keen pleasure in their work, with leisure for reflection and enjoyment, and the gathering of fresh ideas from no poor, mean or stinted life, and not deprived of the stimulating influences of natural or architectural beauty, or the touch of refinement, and with the stimulating emulation and co-operation of fellowship instead of cut-throat competition.

These are two ideals somewhat distinct. It remains to be seen which goal we shall ultimately

reach, but much depends upon which we each individually work for, since individual impulse and action are precipitated in the collective force which finally moves the world.

At present the requirements of artistic ideals are not always identical with the demands of commerce, and sometimes not so in any sense at all. There must be always I should think some particular individual reserve in the artist which must bide its time and the fitting medium and opportunity for its expression. The world is slow to apprehend new manifestations of original talent and will not accept immature masterpieces. It becomes a question therefore for the individual artist how far he can, without casting away or losing sight of his higher ideals and aspirations, associate himself with work of a less ambitious, more immediately serviceable, but not necessarily less artistic kind. It is here that technical knowledge will come in to help him, and there is room for the very best talents and invention in design in the work of the loom, and the printing press, iron, wood, stone, metal, glass, in a thousand materials and forms which contribute to build up the life of ordinary civilized man. When the design and construction of our furniture, and the various patterns and accessories which minister to the daily wants of humanity fall into purely mechanical hands, and artistic craftsmen no longer concern themselves with the unity of use and

beauty, the sense of beauty and pleasure in life which comes of the exercise of the artistic faculty and of its appreciation, both are in a fair way to perish of inanition.

It cannot too often be insisted on that the vital springs which nourish the growth of the tree of art to its topmost branches must be looked for in the harmonious character of all things connected with life itself, and since human happiness is bound up with harmonious social arrangements in all ways, the importance of such considerations cannot well be exaggerated.

As in the pursuit of art we advance in the possession and interpretation of beauty and in the power of conferring higher pleasure to the cultivated senses and intellect, so are the forms of art apt to be placed higher in the scale: but High Art can only mean the art which embodies the highest beauty and conveys the most lasting and ennobling pleasure. It is its *quality* more than its particular *form* which settles this. Sharp lines of demarcation are often drawn between fine art and decorative, or industrial, art, for instance, which have proved very misleading. A good design is far and away better than a bad picture any day, but the arts are really an equal brotherhood. Excellence in any one branch probably requires as fine capacities as excellence in another. Beauty is of different kinds, but perfect beauty of design and workmanship must be acknowledged to be

so, after its kind, whenever we meet with it, and who shall hold the scales between one kind of beauty and another.

If an exquisite work of the loom—say such a Persian carpet as may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, satisfies the eye with lovely and subtle harmonies of colour, with delicate and beautiful and inventive design, and even suggestions of romance and poetry: can the finest work of the painter give us more? Are threads and dyes necessarily inferior to pigments and palettes, or the loom less a work of ingenious joinery than the easel?

Whatever may be the official and scientific classification of the arts agreed on, there is but one spirit in which to study and practice in any or all of them—sincerity and the love of beauty. "Strive to attain excellence in the things which are themselves excellent" sounds a good dictum but it is thoroughly Academic. Certain things are assumed to be excellent, and then excellence is to be striven for in them and in them alone. But how often in life—in the history of art and humanity has it been that some great artist and inventor has taken some poor despised thing and made it excellent. Think of the wealth of beauty and invention which makes alive the smallest fragment of Gothic carving, and invests every cup and bowl, every bench end and knife-handle of the middle ages with beauty and romance. The

commonest weed may contain a fine motive in design, just as, in another way, the whole spirit of Japanese art in its weird, half-supernatural naturalism and magic delicacy of touch, may haunt a tiny ivory button, or be wrought into a sword hilt.

It does not follow that everything should be ornamented. Artistic feeling is shown often as much in the judgement which restrains or forbids ornament as in the fertility of invention from which it springs.

Organic consistency, adaptation to purpose, harmony and relation to surroundings. These are qualities at least as important as ornament.

Yet it seems often to be thought that decorative art means ornamenting something: but the very word decoration must mean something appropriate —fitting, perfectly adapted.

The engineer who borrows cast-iron Roman capitals and mouldings to adorn the iron railing and supports of his gasometer is not necessarily making it more artistic. A wrought-iron screen veiling the cylinder altogether, full of fancy and grace of treatment, might be more artistic—though it might raise the price of gas.

The skeleton has a beauty of its own, "Thou art nor modelled, glazed, or framed," says Tennyson, to his "rough sketch of man." Yet we should not like to live in a world of skeletons, however valuable a knowledge of the bones and mechanism of the joints is to students of the human form.

Engineers are good skeleton makers, but their skeleton structures do not often appeal to the sense of the beautiful—from the Eiffel Tower to the Forth Bridge. They can never be mistaken for architecture, they are triumphs of engineering, but they remain skeletons, and they are too big to be put in the cupboard. Perhaps our engineers are busy devising skeletons for the future to clothe and invest with life and beauty—or to *bury*! Yet for all that constructive lines—at least, simple ones which the eye can follow are, as a rule, beautiful lines. But I think if the sense of beauty was really a living and effective force, we should consider it a crime to destroy natural or architectural beauty, or to take away the public possession or enjoyment of it by any means, and should insist that the problem of utility was but half solved unless the result was harmonious.

At present the world seems too busy about other matters—dissecting and analysing, experimenting, buying and selling, manufacturing and speculating, to care collectively for beauty, perhaps, and truth is at present too many-sided and composite to be easily reconciled with beauty. All is tumult and conflict, and through the smoke and dust of the commercial competitive battle in which we spend our lives we are not quite sure when the sun is shining, and when we *are* sure, are perhaps too busy making the proverbial hay to notice the beauty of it. That is only for artists and idlers,

and the world has such a horror of idleness that people, not condemned to hard labour, have acquired a habit of being extremely busy about nothing in particular, and it is supposed to be a conclusive argument against Socialism to ask "What will you do with the idle?" which seems a little like raising an objection to eating your dinner because you don't know what you will do when you are not hungry!

Artistic ability and power of design are often talked of as if they were in the nature of conjuring tricks, and their exponents like those automatic machines at the stations which only require "a penny in the slot" to satisfy every ordinary modern human requirement from butter-scotch to green spectacles.

It is not sufficiently realized that the sense of art and the power of its creation is a growth of the mind (as well as facility of hand) which must have its processes of germination and fruition.

Art is not nature. It is a commentary or creative variation upon it, but in the progress of its own development art follows natural laws. Truth and Beauty are true lovers, but the course of true love never did run smooth. While Truth in various disguises is roaming desert places, sometimes like a knight errant fighting with sphinxes and dragons, sometimes, like Thor with his hammer, striking blows, the effects of which are only seen long afterwards; Beauty, like an enchanted princess, is

often shut up in gloomy castles closed round with thorny woods or thronging factory chimneys. It is our business to re-discover her, to awaken her, to interpret her afresh to the world—to show that if beauty sleeps, our senses are only half awake, and our lives a meaningless monotony.

ON SOME OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS ALLIED TO ARCHITECTURE

ON SOME OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS ALLIED TO ARCHITECTURE.

AN ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION

I HAVE been asked to address you on the Arts allied to Architecture. Now, as students of Architecture you will feel, considering how closely associated all the arts of design have been in the past, with Architecture as the mother-art, that it would be very difficult to draw a line between them, or to define the precise point at which any one of them naturally part company to be considered as a separate art. In the course of evolution many causes and forces have combined to change their relationship, however, and to give some of them a more or less independent position relatively to what they once had, as in the case of modern painting and sculpture; although these arts in their origin appear to be more closely related and essential to the forms of architecture with which they are combined than almost any of the other crafts. Indeed, it would almost seem as if sculpture might dispute the claim of primogeniture with architecture itself, since cave-dwell-

ing and rock-cut temples seem more of the nature of the former; and also when we come to the wall sculptures of Nineveh and find winged bulls forming gateways; or see, as at the gate of Mycenae, beyond the builders' cyclopean craft of stone on stone, the only architectural forms and ornament in the sculpture of the slab over the gateway itself, in the column each side of which the lions stand, and in the carved discs and spirals below them.

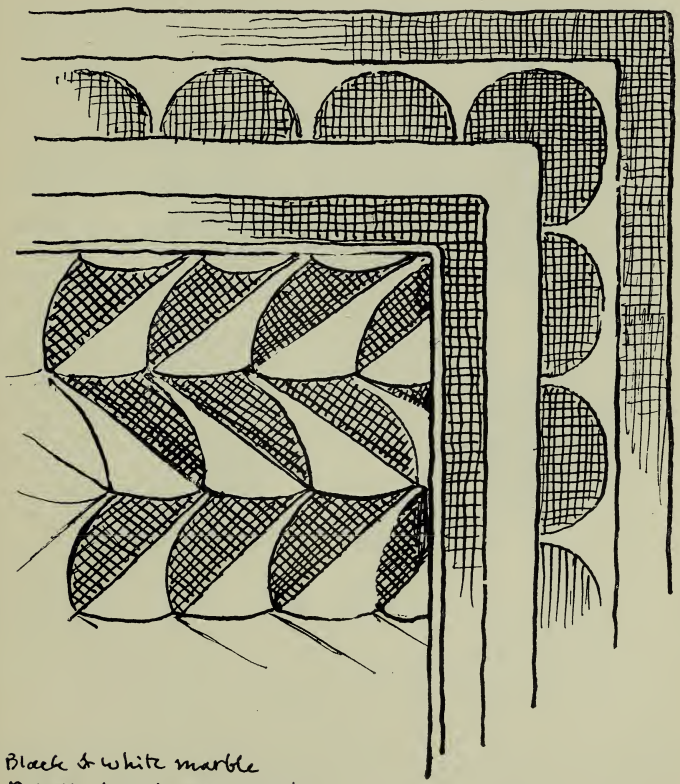
Again, when we come to the buildings of ancient Athens, temples of the Parthenon type might almost be described as frames or pedestals for sculpture, although in the case of the Parthenon the architecture and sculpture are so perfectly united that we hardly think of them apart. The sculptor seizes upon the deep pediments and the triglyphs to tell his mythical and symbolic story, and emphasizes them in bold relief and counterbalancing mass; to which the lines of roof and cornice, of entablature and column play a harmonious accompaniment, while the more delicate frieze completes and unites the whole scheme. Though we know that sculpture was not left to the cold embrace of white marble, but must have been beautiful in colour as it now is in form, the genius of sculpture seems to dominate here. Greek architecture, too, only repeats in stone and marble and on a large scale the primitive construction of wood; and this takes us back to the days of the sacred ark,

or the tabernacle of the Israelites, more of a shrine or tent than a building, which depended so much for its beauty upon the adornment it received from —"The cunning workman, the engraver, the embroiderer in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work" (Ex. xxxv, 35). Certainly here, as in the descriptions of the building of Solomon's temple all the arts appeared to co-operate and were equally important to the beauty of the result, and we get a splendid picture of oriental colour and ornament. The account of the olive-tree doors of the temple carved with cherubim and palm trees and open flowers and overlaid with gold, shows the early use of a craft very dear to the modern decorator—gilding: though it probably means a more substantial kind than that of the modern frame-maker, since the text has it that "he covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work" (1 Kings, vi, 35).

The craft of working thin plates of gold and other metals in repoussé is clearly a very ancient one, and contributed to what must have been a very splendid effect in interior decoration. Our use of silvered or gilded metal in modern wall sconces and door plates may be a relic of times when it was more extensively used and on larger surfaces, but one can hardly imagine a more splendid effect than a wall covering of beaten gold.

The ordinary brass or copper repoussé work of our own day is either worked from the surface only by following the lines of the design drawn on the metal by a tool called a tracer, straight or curved, as may be required for straight or curved lines, although a straight tracer will follow all but very small curves. The tracer is tapped with a broad-ended hammer according to the amount of relief intended. I should have said the sheet of metal is fastened down over a sheet of lead by screws or nails to a deal board before working on. When the outlines of the design are hammered out, the background, which bumps up between the traced lines, has to be matted. This may be done by various patterned tools called matting tools. Your design, when the matting is done, will stand in low relief from its ground, and may be polished as much as desired. Although a pleasing effect of soft relief is obtained, this is not carrying the work very far, and would only satisfy amateurs. True repoussé work consists in actually modelling by the hammer and punch, and for this both for delicate and bold relief it is necessary to reverse the metal on the pitch block. This is formed of a mixture of pitch and Russian tallow sprinkled with plaster of paris, which forms a somewhat firm but easily indentable substance when warmed, and can be held together in tin trays. While the pitch is soft you must press in your metal plate the reverse side up and then beat up the hollows of the design as

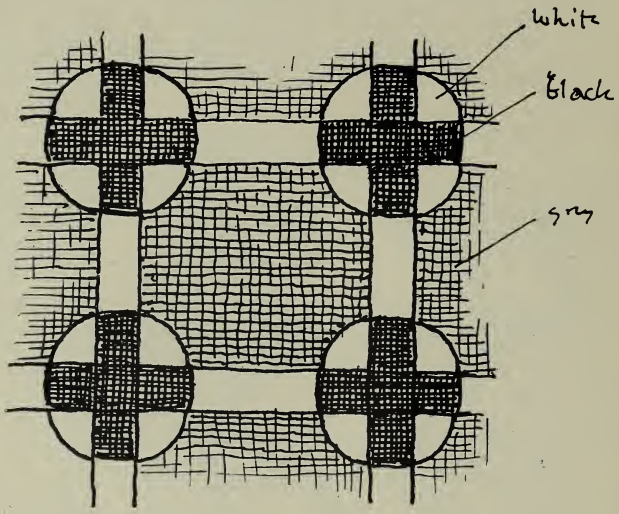
they have been defined by the tracer on the face of the work and which show clearly on the back. The



Black & White marble
Roman Mosaic pavement.
Baths of Caracalla.
From sketch made in 1871.

tools used for doing this are rounded punches of various forms. The hammering is done rather persuasively, as sudden blows make sudden dents,

which are not easily smoothed. Parts of the work, again, may be hammered on the surface over a lead or pitch block, or it may be hammered over a pattern carved in wood. This method is used

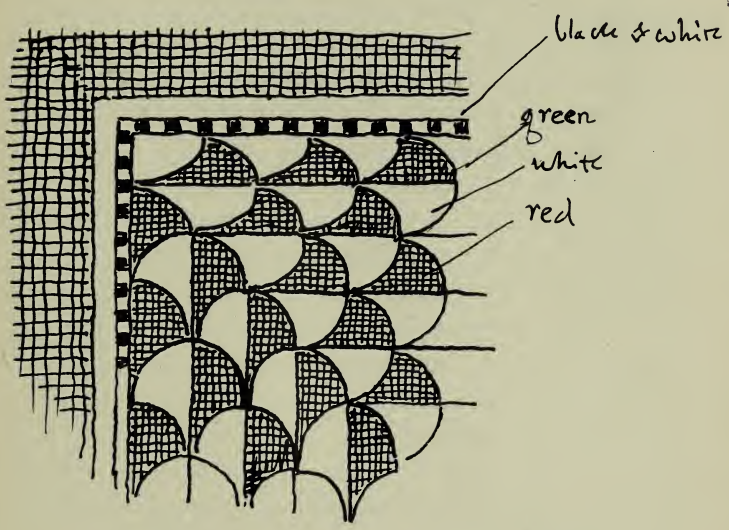


Patterns of Roman mosaic pavements.
Baths of Caracalla.
(from sketches made in 1871)

when several forms recur, or it is desired to repeat the same pattern.

Another art of very early association with Architecture is mosaic, which may be said to be perhaps the most permanent and most splendid kind of architectural decoration ever used. In the matter

of marble mosaic the Romans, though not the inventors of the art, in their pavements carried it to great elaboration, and worked it in many forms, the most successful being, to my mind, the simpler forms of flat pattern-work such as are seen in the



PATTERN OF ROMAN MOSAIC PAVEMENT, FROM THE BATHS OF CARACALLA.

baths of Caracalla at Rome, where white marble, or black, or black or white, is very effectively used, and there are some admirable scale-pattern borders. These make more reserved and satisfactory decorations for a floor than the shaded pictorial battle-pieces and figures of gladiators such as are seen at the Borghese Villa. In the Bardo Palace

Museum at Tunis there is a very fine collection of Roman mosaic pavements. There has been a very extensive revived use of marble mosaic for the covering of entrance floors and halls in our own time; but it has been rather too much of the second-hand Roman type, although at its best it is a good type, and, as we know, many original Roman examples have been discovered, so that we are not without historic models in our own country. Marble mosaic is usually somewhat limited in colour but looking to the variety and beauty of tint to be found in marbles there is perhaps more restriction than need be, as well as in type of design. I made a design for the floor of a bank at Cleveland, Ohio, when I was in the States, which I am afraid might have tried the colour-resources of the mosaicist, since I introduced a symbolical figure of Columbia coining, wrapped in a robe of stars and stripes, which, however, would look sober enough when translated into marble tones.

For real splendour of colour we must turn to glass mosaic, and for magnificent examples of its architectural use we cannot do better than look at the churches of Ravenna. My friend, the late J. T. Micklethwaite, speaking of mosaic, once humorously remarked that mosaic in decoration was "like beer—of no use unless you had a lot of it." (That is all very well for those who can imbibe, and the dictum should appeal to Britons.) How-

ever, the use of mosaic at Ravenna and St. Mark's shows what my friend meant. In the mausoleum of Gallia Placida, a small rounded arched and vaulted Byzantine building of the fifth century, there are no mouldings or carving, or any kind of architectural enrichment, to interfere with the effect of the complete lining of mosaic, chiefly in pale tones of gold and colour on a deep, subdued but rich blue ground. The effect is very solemn and splendid. The actual workmanship of the Ravenna mosaics would no doubt be considered rough by the more mechanical modern mosaicist who does not accept the cube principle in using tesserae. The head of the Empress Theodora at San Vitale, for instance, is very simply done. The tesserae are few—but since the effect from the proper distance is fine, they must be fit though few. Then these mosaics like all the ancient ones, must have been worked from the surface. This gives a certain play of surface and depth and richness of colour, each tesserae not having been set at precisely the same angle to the plane of the wall, or to its neighbour cube.

The modern Venetian way is to make the panels perfectly flat on the surface, the cement being spread over the tesserae when arranged face downwards. The modern Venetian workmen will copy a cartoon properly tesserated with the utmost precision, as I have discovered, but his panels have not the surface sparkle and variety of the

old work. The method of putting in the tesserae from the front has however been revived since I made my designs. The design by Sir Edward Burne-Jones for the dome of the New American Church at Rome was worked in this way, and recently a mosaic altar-piece of "The Last Supper," for a church in Philadelphia, was executed in this way by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Holiday, the tesserae being inserted in a layer of putty.

In London we have the great work of Sir W. B. Richmond in the choir of St. Paul's, which was all worked from the surface—the tesserae being set in red lead putty which, occasionally allowed to show at the joints, give a certain warmth of tone to the whole. Whatever difference of opinion there may be about the decoration of St. Paul's, the designs of Sir William Richmond are exceedingly fine and conceived in a noble spirit.

Mr. Anning Bell has carried out a charming design in mosaic worked from the surface for the exterior of the Horniman Museum. One projected for the exterior of the Whitechapel Picture Gallery, from a design of my own, has not so far been executed for want of funds.

I have often thought, when looking at the beautiful arrangements of tint in the fine shingle of some of our sea beaches, that the materials for a very effective kind of mosaic, at small cost, might be found there, and adapted for the ornamentation of the external walls of seaside houses, in friezes,

strings, panels, or even entire walls. In thus reviving the ancient art of pebble-mosaic, a charming local character might thus be given to the buildings of certain of our coast places which would add very greatly to their attractions. The thing, of course, would need some intelligence and taste, without which indeed the most costly and beautiful materials in the world may be wasted.

One of the most charming and simple ways of decorating external walls is to be found in the patterns indented in the plaster of the surface filling of half-timbered houses such as are so plentiful in Suffolk and Essex. It is a characteristic and ancient method which it is gratifying to note is made use of by modern architects and builders in that district. Figures and ornament in relief are also used. A mixture of Portland cement and lime is a good material for this purpose, as it does not set too quickly, but finally sets hard and is durable.

Delicate plaster relief-work for ceilings and friezes is also a very charming method of interior decoration, and there are very fine examples scattered over the country, though its original home was, I presume, in Italy, whose craftsmen still maintain their pre-eminence in the skill with which they deal with the manipulation of all kinds of plaster-work. Plaster and stucco must have been largely used in ancient Rome, and there are very beautiful, both bold and delicate, examples in

the decorations of the famous tombs of the Via Latina. In one instance, on a wagon vault, the figures appear to have been worked directly in the soft plaster and the relief-work is used with vigorous indented lines. The effect of the work is wonderfully direct, simple, and fresh, and suggests having been done with speed and certainty. Raphael, influenced no doubt by old Roman work, introduced modelled portions in his painted designs for the Loggia of the Vatican. The usual modern method is to model the design in clay, mould it in gelatine, and then cast it in fibrous plaster panels (supposing it is for relief work) and screw them in position, stopping the joints afterwards. This, though it has many conveniences, is not so artistic in its results as when the design is worked directly in stucco or gesso in its proper position; but if we could be sure of finding the plasterers and craftsman to do it, we should but rarely find the opportunity, or the client who would allow time for such work *in situ*.

A middle course is to model your design—say, for a frieze or ceiling—in gesso or stucco of some kind on fibrous plaster panels; and the design may be planned so as to cut up into convenient-sized panels to work on an easel in the studio, and be fixed in position afterwards.

I have worked panels in this way using plaster of paris, thin glue, and cotton wool. The ground should be wetted, or the suction stopped by a

coat of shellac, or the work is apt to dry too quickly and peel off.

For delicate relief ornamentation, say, in wall panelling and furniture, a kind of gesso duro is good. This is a mixture of whitening, glue, boiled linseed oil and resin. It is mixed to a creamy consistency, the whitening being first soaked in water. The gesso is laid on with a brush—long pointed sable is best. The gesso sets slowly, but very hard, so that any part of the work could be scraped down if necessary.

Another effective method for external and interior work in decoration is sgraffito, also of Italian origin. It consists in cutting or scratching a design through one or more layers of mixed lime and cement on to coloured grounds. A ground is laid on the plaster of the wall, say, of black, made by mixing black oxide of manganese and breeze from a smith's forge with the cement. When this is set, a layer of mixed lime and cement is laid over the black, about a quarter of an inch or more thick. When this layer has partly set, and is about the consistency of cheese, you cut your design out, its lines and masses defined by the black ground beneath as you cut away the top layer. Two or three colours may be used in the same way, one being laid over the other, and the effect produced by cutting down to the different layers as you wish.

I once came to a town in Bohemia, Pracatic, a

wonderful old place, with a fine deep Gothic gateway, with a fresco of a knight-at-arms over it. The walls of the principal houses appear to have been entirely decorated with designs in sgraffito. The Rathaus or town hall was the most elaborate and best preserved, and was covered with designs from Bible story, divided by pilasters, and panelled in scroll ornament.

Sgraffito is still extensively used in Italy and Germany, where one sees much more elaborate work in it, and on a more extensive scale than anything here, unless we except the considerable and excellent work of Mr. Heywood Sumner in this material. He, however, has used it chiefly for interior wall decoration and churches. He generally uses three colours, red, green, and black, by which his large, simple, and bold designs are well expressed. Our climate—more especially town climate—is generally unfavourable to the effectiveness and permanence of the work as exterior decoration. There is, however, an excellent object lesson in sgraffito of various kinds to be seen on the back wall of the Science Schools at South Kensington, the work of the late Mr. Moody.

It seems curious that more has not been attempted in the way of external decoration by means of coloured and glazed tiles. The colour in these is permanent enough, and good quality of colour can be obtained. I fancy pleasant effects could be produced by facing the front of houses

with coloured tiles, and introducing friezes and plaques beneath and between the windows. The ground story of many brick houses in London streets are cemented and painted. Why not try the effect of coloured tiles instead? Mr. Halsey Ricardo, it may be mentioned, has used De Morgan tile panels most effectively in a house he designed in Addison Road, Kensington, which is distinguished also by a beautiful roof of green glazed tiles from Spain. Mr. Conrad Dressler has also designed extensive mural decorations in a kind of Luca della Robbia manner, which is very effective. For splendour of effect, too, few things could equal designs produced in lustre.

Tiles, of course, have long held an undisputed position as decorative linings for fire-places. A new domestic application of them is suggested in that little gem of a picture by Van der Meer of Delft, recently added to our National Gallery, where white Dutch tiles with blue figures are fixed along the wall on the floor line, where one usually sees the wooden skirting.

Of the beauty of the effect of raised figures treated in faïence colours and glazes as an architectural decoration there is a splendid example in the frieze of archers from the palace wall of Darius, now at Paris, apparently made of moulded bricks glazed with colour, a good reproduction of which was to be seen in what was formerly the architectural court at the Victoria and Albert

Museum; where also we could study the bold and beautiful frieze of Luca della Robbia from the Ospedale at Pistoia. One wants to see it in the full Italian sunshine and in its proper architectural setting fully to appreciate its fine decorative effect, and it is to be regretted that these reproductions of architectural decorative works are not exhibited in the Museum with an indication of their framework to show their relation to the buildings of which they form part.[1] It would be better to have fewer examples properly displayed, I believe, than a multitude crowded together, with no means of judging of them in their proper relation to their surroundings. If the examples were accompanied by good and clear drawings or photographs of the entire buildings it would be useful.

At Pistoia, also, there is a charming porch to the cathedral covered with Robbia ware in white, yellow, and blue, in association with black and white banded marble.[2] Such examples show with what beautiful decorative effect majolica can be associated with architecture.

To Italy, again, we must look for the most beautiful illustrations of the unity of painting with architecture, from the work of Giotto at

[1] This was written before the arrangement of the collections in the new building of the Victoria and Albert Museum was complete.

[2] An illustration of this porch is given in my "Bases of Design."

Padua and Assisi to the crowning work of the Renascence, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michael Angelo. The most perfect example of mural decoration in Italy I have seen, is, however, to be found in the Appartimenti Borgia in the Vatican, painted by Pinturrichio, a very beautiful model of which can be studied in the Victoria and Albert Museum (it was formerly in the Italian Court). Here we have a scheme of decoration at once restrained and rich, in strict relation to the construction, and yet-full of variety and beauty of detail; and it is interesting, too, as an example of the use of gilded gesso used both for details in the wall pictures, as well as for arabesque ornament, and bordering on the vaulted ceiling. The lower wall was evidently originally intended to be covered with tapestry hangings, as there is a moulding with the little hooks to hold them; and this would have completed the effect of the whole in a rich and reposeful way. Another very rich and beautiful instance of the earlier Renascence mural painting may be seen in the Riccardi Chapel at Florence by Benozzo Gozzoli. Some full-sized copies are at South Kensington, notably one of Lorenzo de Medici in a gilded dress going a-hunting.

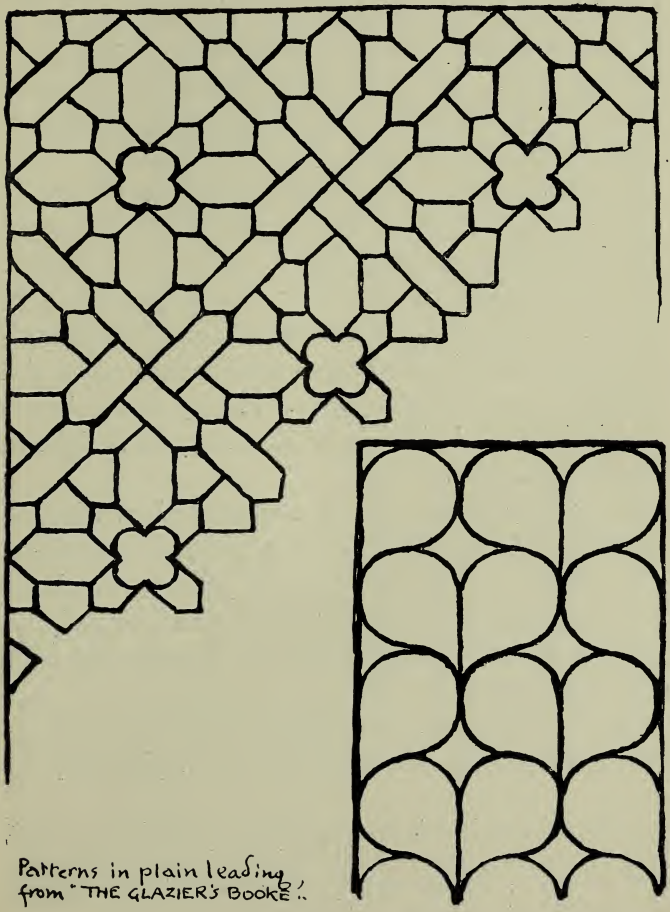
The famous Campo Santo at Pisa, and the frescoes in the town hall of Siena are fine instances of the days when mural painting was a living and popular art, frankly appealing to the

love of story and romance, vivid, dramatic, and yet superbly decorative. Superior modern critics might scorn such types of art as "literary," and their *naïveté* as "childish"; but their story-telling power is an inseparable part of their artistic form, and never oversteps it, just as their decorative instinct is in perfect accord and harmony with their architectural conditions.

This was long before the days of academies and art schools, when there was no technical art education outside the workshop, no competitive examinations, and a man learnt his craft by apprenticeship to it, beginning at the beginning, under a master craftsman.

I fail to see how any art can be wholly taught or learned on general principles, since it is of the nature of art to address itself to particular problems, the conditions of which constantly vary. Certain general principles have been evolved out of collective practice of more or less value, no doubt, in a general way, but they must always be liable to qualification in their adaptation to particular cases. Nothing of the nature of art can be formulated as an exact science, happily, or the limits of its invention and variety would soon be reached. Art, however, has its scientific side, though the science of art is not exactly scientific or theoretic, but practical, and rather consists in recognizing particular necessities of conditions and materials, and the realizing that the frank

acknowledgment of the nature of these conditions and materials leads, in all the varieties of design,



Patterns in plain leading from "THE GLAZIER'S BOOKE".

in association with craftsmanship and architecture, to the highest beauty.

The peculiar beauty of a stained glass window, for instance, is entirely dependent upon this frank acknowledgment of conditions. A screen of transparent colour and pattern, defined and united by leads, and held in position by iron bars. Directly any attempt is made to overstep its natural limits —to make it look like a painted picture, to get chiaroscuro and vanishing points, or to try to ignore the leading as an essential condition of its existence—the charm and the joy of it is lost. There is a distinct character and beauty both in plain leaded glass and roundels throwing a pleasant network of simple geometric lines over the blankness of window-panes. Henry Shaw, in his Glazier's Book,[1] gives a great variety of delightful leading patterns.

Now, any design for a coloured glass window should, in the first place, be a good arrangement of lead-lines, I think—a good pattern, in short, whether figure subject or not—and, secondly, a good pattern considered as an arrangement of colour or jewelled light.

The artistic designer and maker of a wrought-iron gate, grille, or railing, whatever phantasy he

[1] The full title is "A Booke of Sundry Draughtes. Principally serving for Glasiers: And not impertinent for plasterers, and gardeners: besides sundry other professions. London. William Pickering 1848." It is almost wholly copied from an older work "printed in Shoolane at the sign of the Falcon by Walter Dwight 1615."

might introduce, would never forget the essential requirements of a gate, grille, or railing. He would never forget the architectural relation of his work, or rather he would make the chief beauty and inventiveness of his treatment of wrought iron spring out of that relation.

The practice of modelling in clay (though it may be useful in a student's training) designs intended to be carved in wood, has, it seems to me, been most destructive of the beauty and character of true woodcarving. The same may be said of stone and marble. The essential spirit and go of the thing, the characteristic touch and treatment which each material in which the designer works claims as its own, and which is its own particular reason for existing, these are, of course, lost or tamed out of recognition when a copy is made of something already existing in a material and produced by a method totally different.

Much better keep to simple mouldings and plain painting than bring in ornament which has no character or meaning of its own. We must not confuse the mere spreading of ornament with decoration in its true sense, for Design in all its forms may be said to be governed by an architectural instinct of its own, which makes it a harmonious part of the building with which it is united, and which unites it, and puts it in harmony with itself.

In the limits of a short paper it is impossible to

do more than deal very lightly with so vast a subject as the Arts allied to Architecture, and there are many that I have not been able to touch at all, since, properly considered, *all* the arts are, or should be, allied to architecture, and the history of architecture covers the history of human life itself; and what, let us ask, would architecture be without the associated arts which help to express and adorn it and fit each part for the use and service of man.

NOTES ON COLOUR EMBROIDERY AND ITS TREATMENT

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EMBROIDERY as an art of design may be considered from many different points of view—but none of these are more important than those of colour and its treatment. It is indeed to colour that decorative needlework owes its chief charm, and in no direction is the influence of controlling taste more essential, and in its absence the most elaborate workmanship and technical accomplishment are apt to be wasted.

The choice and treatment of colour must naturally depend, in the first place, upon the object and purpose of the work, which would, of course, decide the scale and motive of its pattern.

As applied to costume, in which direction we find some of its most delicate and beautiful examples, nearness to the eye, the construction of the garment and the proportions of figure would have to be considered.

The Russian peasants have a form of frock or long blouse worn by young girls, which affords an instance of effective use of frank and bright colour upon a white ground. The garment itself is of homespun linen. It has a square opening for the

neck, and is put on over the head, like a smock frock. The sleeves are quite simple, full on the upper arm and narrowing to a band on the wrist. The skirt, which falls straight from the shoulders, is decorated with a series of horizontal bands of pattern worked in cross-stitch, the principal colours being red and green, colours which always tell well upon white. The square-cut opening at the neck and the cuffs are emphasized by embroidered pattern of similar kind but on a smaller scale. The garment is ingeniously adapted to the growth of its wearer by adding extra rings of pattern to the skirt, and by enlarging a square piece let in at the arm-pits.

The Hungarian peasant women are most admirable embroiderers, and in their festal costumes display an extraordinary wealth of brilliant colour, employing, like the Russian, principally the cross-stitch on white linen. They are fond of decorating the ends of their pillow-cases which are piled up one upon the other on the bed, usually set against the wall in their cottages, so that only the outside ends show, and these alone are embroidered. Both the patterns, which are traditional and have an oriental character, and their colour show a strong decorative sense and natural taste. Many of them being worked in a single tone of red or blue, always effective on white. In some parts short sleeveless leather jackets lined with sheep's wool are worn. These are made incredibly gorgeous in colour by

a kind of combined *appliqué* and stitch embroidery, the vivid greens, reds, blues, and purples being kept in their place by the broad white of the shirt

sleeves which flank them on each side when worn.

More austere arrangements are however found. There is a large heavy overcoat, with hanging sleeves and deep collar, worn by the Hungarian farmers, made of white wool. This is ornamented

most judiciously by *appliqué* embroidery in black and green. The chief points of decoration being the collar, the cuffs, and the hem.

In the Montenegrin section of the Balkan States Exhibition at Earl's Court there were some charming shirts and blouses embroidered with gold thread and colour, in bands. The constructive points, such as the neck opening, the junction of the yoke and sleeves, sometimes the sleeves themselves were richly ornamented with designs in gold and colour with excellent effect.

Good examples of treatment of rich colour in combination with light pattern are to be found among Cretan embroideries. The decoration in bands of the ends of the muslin scarves, relieved with silver and gold thread, often recalls the effect of the illuminated borders of fourteenth and fifteenth-century manuscripts, having a delightfully gay and sparkling effect. These Cretan embroideries are examples of the harmonious effect in the arrangement of a number of different colours in the same pattern, grouped around a central feature which forms the dominating note; this is generally in the form of a large red flower with a gold centre, and this is surrounded with smaller detached star-like flowers, and formal cypress trees in leaf-shaped enclosures of gold or silver thread. The design being repeated, with slight variations, to form a band or border of pattern decorating the ends of the scarf. In a sample before me eight colours are used,

besides gold and silver thread. The colours are: (1) red, in centre flower (a light vermilion); (2) crimson (sometimes, alas, magenta); (3) pink (pale salmon); (4) orange; (5) light (lemon) yellow of greenish tone); (6) olive (dark); (7) pale blue, and (8) dark blue.

As every embroideress knows, colour in embroidery is very much influenced by texture. The

CRETAN EMBROIDERY. Silk on Muslin, heightened with gold & silver thread.

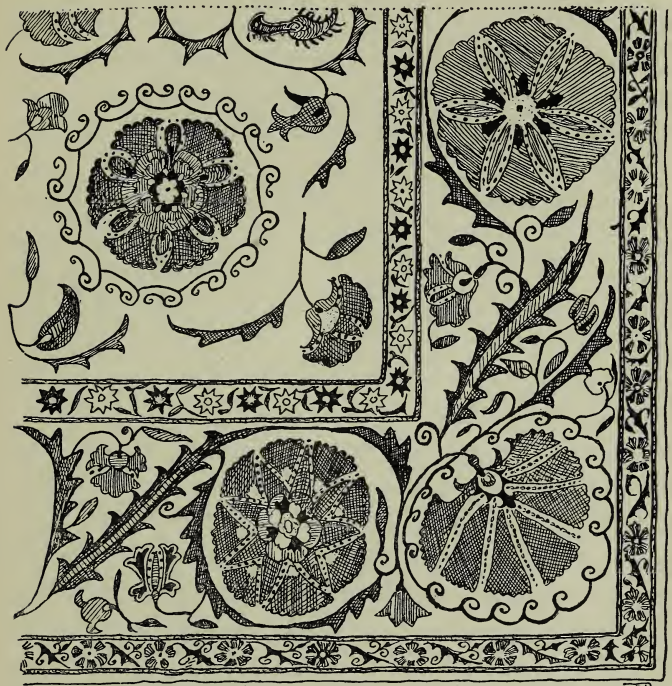
colour of a skein of silk looking different from the same colour when worked. Juxtaposition with other colours, again, alters the effect of a colour. As a general principle, especially where many colours are employed, we are more likely to secure harmony if we choose reds, for instance, inclining to orange, blues inclining to green, yellows inclining to green or brown, blacks of a greenish or olive tone. Perfectly frank and pure colours, however,

may be harmonized, especially with the use of gold, though they are more difficult to deal with—unless one can command the natural, primitive instinct of the Hungarian, the Greek, or the Persian peasant.

For bold decorative work few kinds of embroidery design are more delightful than the bordered cloths and covers from Bokhara. Here, again, the colours are chiefly red and green in different shades, the reds concentrated in the form of big flowers in the intervals of an open arabesque of thin stems and curved and pointed leaves in green, the whole design upon a white linen ground.

Such joyful, frank, and bold colour, however, would be usually considered too bright for the ordinary English interior, and under our gray skies; and colour, after all, is so much a question of climate, and though for its full splendour we turn to the south and east, we need not want for models of beautiful, if quieter, harmonies in the natural tints of our native country at different seasons of the year. There are abundant suggestions to be had from field and hedgerow at all times—arrangements in russet, or gold, or green. What can be more beautiful as a colour motive than the frail pink or white of the blossoms of the briar rose, starring the green arabesque of thorny stem and leaf; or its scarlet hip and bronze green leaf in the autumn; or the crisp, white pattern of

the field daisy on the pale green of the hay field, relieved by the yellow centres and by the red of



BOKHARA · EMBROIDERY. Silk on linen - chiefly in chain stitch
The large flowers are worked in Two shades of rich red inclining to crimson. with Yellow centres relieved by dark blue - The blue & yellow & red are repeated in the smaller flowers The leaves are blueish green with a red line down centre. they are outlined with bronze brown which is also used for the stems & spirals
Inner border, between red lines - The star-flowers are alternately blue & red with yellow centres with bronze leaves - The outer border, also between red lines. The flowers are red with blue & yellow centres alternately, & green & bronze leaves

sorrel; or the brave scarlet of the poppy between the thin gold threads of the ripe corn. Then, too, there are beautiful schemes of colour to be found in the plumage of our birds. Take the colours of

a jay, for instance—a mass of fawn-coloured gray with a pinkish tinge, relieved with touches of intense black and white and small bars of turquoise blue and white. A charming scheme for an embroidered pattern might be made of such an arrangement, if the colours were used in similar proportions to those of nature—say in a costume.

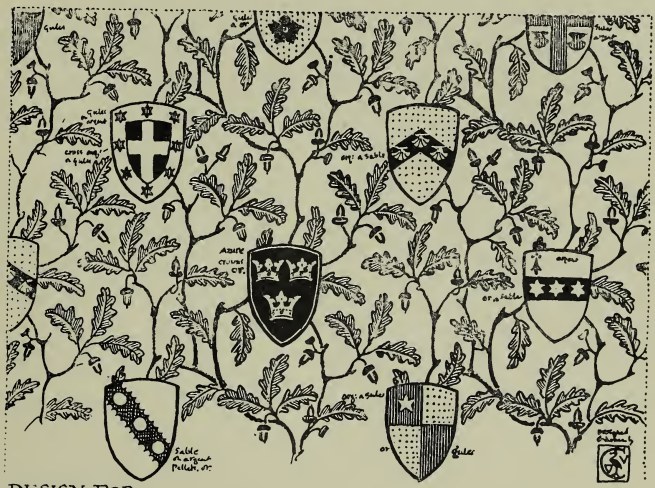
The mainspring of colour suggestion, as of design, in embroidery, however, must be found in Nature's own embroidery—flowers, and the garden must always be an unfailing source of fresh suggestion for floral design both in colour and form. But, of course, everything in the process of adaptation to artistic purposes is under the necessity of translation or transformation, and any form or tint in nature must be re-stated in the terms proper to the art or craft under its own conditions and limitations as being essential to the character and beauty of the result, *suggestion*, rather than imitation of nature, being the principle to follow.

But while we must go to nature for fresh inspiration in colour invention or combination, we have a guide in the traditions and examples of the craft and the choice of stitches to influence our treatment.

The colour principles, too, we may find in allied arts may help us.

Heraldry, for instance, while shields of arms,

crests, and mottoes, are in themselves excellent material for embroidery, as units of embroidered pattern. The principles of the disposition and countercharge of colour in heraldry, and the methods of its display and treatment in form as



ORIGINAL DESIGN BY WALTER CRANE.

exemplified in the heraldic design of the best periods—say, from the twelfth to the fifteenth century—will be found full of useful lessons. A repeating pattern of leaves or flowers in a hanging is pleasantly enriched and varied by the introduction of heraldic badges or shields at intervals, the

emphatic concentrated colour and accent of the heraldry contrasting with the less formal, open, but evenly dispersed design with its recurring units and counterbalancing curves which form the main field of the hanging. Interesting heraldic devices for such purposes may be found in every locality, either of family, civic, or general historic interest, our village churches being generally valuable treasuries from this point of view.

Where it is desired to restrict colour in embroidery to two or three tints, and restricted colour is generally suitable to simple decorative purposes with corresponding simplicity of design, it is safe to follow the principle of complementary colours in nature. Red and green, blue and orange, brown and yellow, and so on, but, of course, this would leave an immense range of choice of actual tint of any one colour open. Your red, for instance, might be salmon pink or deep crimson, your green that of the first lime shoots in spring to the metallic bronze of the holly leaf; your blue might be that of larkspur or the turquoise of the palest forget-me-not, while your orange might be that of the ripe fruit or the tint of faded beech-leaf. Tasteful work, however, may be done in two or three shades of the same colour.

The choice of tint for the embroidery must depend largely upon the tint and material of the ground, and also upon the material in which the

work itself is to be carried out—silk, cotton thread, or crewels. Whether, however, for designs which entirely cover the ground, or for the lightest open floral pattern, linen seems the material on which the best results are produced.

NOTES ON EARLY ITALIAN GESSO WORK

NOTES ON EARLY ITALIAN GESSO WORK

THE charming varieties of decoration in relief by means of modelled gesso and stucco which attained to such richness and beauty in the hands of Italian artists in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, are traceable to very early origins, and come down from Graeco-Roman and Roman times, and probably had a still earlier existence in the East, since decoration in raised gesso was long practised by the Persians and the Arabs, and plaster-work goes back to the ancient Egyptians, who also used gesso grounds for the painting and gilding of their mummy cases. Existing examples of Roman and Pompeian relief work belong mostly to the first century B.C., and are of the nature of architectural enrichments, being chiefly mural and ceiling decorations, worked in plaster and stucco, *in situ*. Many of these are very delicate and show the influence of Greek feeling in design and treatment, such, for instance, as those from the ceilings of the tombs on the Via Latina at Rome, which in their simple panelled treatment, enclosing groups of finely modelled figures seem to be the forerunners of the rich and delicate gesso relief

work, stamped, or modelled with the brush, which the Italians used with such tact in the decoration of caskets, marriage coffers, and other furniture in the early renascence period. Mr. Millar in his comprehensive work on "Plastering" speaks of a very fine example of gesso work as existing in the old cathedral church at Coire, a box which is said to be as old as the ninth century. It is entirely covered with gesso, on which a design in relief has been roughly scrolled. The gesso has been polished so as to give the appearance of ivory, and he further says, "at the corners, where it has got chipped off, the ends of the linen can be seen which has evidently been put next the wood, as Cennino Cennini advises."

Cennino, indeed, in his very interesting "Trattato" (which was translated by Mrs. Merrifield in 1844, for the first time into English, and recently, more accurately and completely, by Mrs. Herringham) gives very full and ample accounts of the methods in use in his time in painting and the allied arts, and gives recipes, also, both for making and working gesso. He lays great stress on the care necessary in preparing grounds on wood both for painting and raised work, and in advocating the use of "linen cloth, old, fine, and white, and free from all grease," writes "take your best size, cut or tear large or small strips of this linen, soak these in the size, and spread them with your hands over the surface of the panel; remove the seams,

and spread the strips out with the palms of the hands, and leave them to dry for two days." He further enjoined one to "remember it is best to use size when the weather is dry and windy. Size is stronger in the winter than in summer, and in winter gilding must be done in damp and rainy weather." Then—Chapter 115—he proceeds to describe the process of laying on the ground of gesso over the linen. His "gesso grosso" used for the ground, is burnt gypsum or what we know as plaster of paris. The same, well-slaked, he uses for finer grounds, and also for working in relief upon such grounds.

In Chapter 116 Cennino describes how to prepare gesso sottile (slaked plaster of paris). The plaster, he says, "must be well purified, and kept moist in a large tub for at least a month; renew the water every day until it (the plaster) almost rots, and is completely slaked, and all fiery heat goes out of it, and it becomes as soft as silk." This gesso is afterwards dried in cakes and Cennino speaks of it in this form as "sold by the druggists to our painters," and that "it is used for grounding, for gilding, for *working in relief*, and other fine works." These cakes were scraped or soaked and ground to powder and mixed with size for using as grounds and for relief work, as occasion required (Chapters 117, 119). In speaking further on (Chapter 124) of "how works in relief are executed on panels with gesso sottile," he says, "take a little of the gesso on the point of

the brush (the brush must be of minever, and the hairs fine and rather long), and with that quickly raise whatever figures you wish to make in relief; and if you raise any foliage, draw the design previously, like the figures, and be careful not to relieve too many things, or confusedly, for the clearer you make your foliage ornaments, the better you will be able to display the ingraining with stamps and they can be better burnished with the stone." He describes (Chapter 125) also methods of casting relief work, "to adorn some parts of the picture" which shows he is thinking of gesso enrichments in painting, so much used by the early painters.

Cennino is said to have been living in Padua in the year 1398. His treatise shows the care and patience necessary to good workmanship in the various arts and crafts he describes, and throws much light upon the methods of the artist craftsman of his time, and is of particular value and interest as touching the subjects of tempera painting, gilding, and, incidentally, of gesso-relief decoration, to the ornamental effect of which both the former are important contributors. Now there are several distinct varieties of gesso work. Firstly we have gesso relief used to adorn and enrich painted panels, or as an adjunct to decorative painting. Of this there are many instances: a notable one may be cited in the frescoes of Pinturrichio in the Appartamenti Borgia in the Vatican

MARRIAGE COFFER, NO. 5804—1859 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

at Rome where the paintings are heightened by gilded parts in relief, such as weapons and ornaments, embroidery or robes, and even architectural mouldings. The late Mr. Spencer Stanhope revived this union of gilded gesso with decorative painting, as in his work in the chapel at Marlborough College. Other examples may be found in our National Gallery. The superb collection of Italian gesso work in the Victoria and Albert Museum, unrivalled anywhere, from which, by the courtesy of the late Mr. Skinner, who was Sir C. Purdon Clarke's successor in the directorship,[1] I am enabled to give my illustrations, may be referred to as furnishing examples of every variety of treatment in the craft, as well as of the taste and invention and richness of early Italian decorative design.

As an adjunct to painting gilded gesso was frequently used burnished and enriched with stamped or punctured patterns (*granare*), often in the form of nimbi around the heads of saints and angels in devotional works, and in backgrounds. Cennino (Chapter 142) speaks of this method and gives directions in it. The Marriage Coffer from the Museum, No. 5804—1859, illustrates this treatment and is a good example of its highly decorative effect. The front panel shows a very rich and interesting design of figures in fifteenth century Florentine costume, heightened with gilded

[1] Before the appointment of Sir Cecil Smith.

ITALIAN CASSONE, NO. 317—1894 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

parts in gesso having small punctured patterns upon it, which give sparkle and variety to the gold. This method seems to have been continued for several centuries in Florence. I have an alms-dish of early seventeenth century date, the centre of which is treated in this way with punctured or hollow pin-head patterns impressed upon a gilded gesso ground.

This method, it may be noted, has lately been revived by Mrs. Adrian Stokes in association with tempera painting.

Stamped work, again, mentioned by Cennino, is another distinct method in gesso decoration. Of this a very beautiful example is the early fourteenth-century Italian cassone (No. 317—1894). This cassone is decorated with figures of knights and ladies on horseback, in hawking and hunting array, each figure being silhouetted in clear profile in a separate square panel, in white, upon a black or a red ground, alternately. These spaces or panels are divided horizontally by bands of running ornament in relief, and, vertically by bands of thin wrought iron foliated at the edges which form protecting and strengthening bands for the chest. The stamps from which these figures were produced must have been most delicately cut. They are full of fine detail and charming in design. It is not quite clear how they could have been so cleanly stamped upon the ground, unless perhaps, the edges and outlines were carefully gone round

SHIELD IN GILDED GESSO, NO. 3—1865 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

and cleared afterwards, or the paste in which they were stamped, perhaps being slow in setting and more or less elastic, might have allowed of their being stamped cleanly out of the material separately and applied to the gesso ground or the chest afterwards.[1]

In design these figures (on the cassone illustrated) are characterized by a certain graceful severity, almost Greek-like in its ornamental restraint, yet in the delicate invention and richness of the decorative details of the costumes and housings of the horses they are oriental in treatment.

It has often been said that human figures cannot be repeated with satisfactory decorative effect, but this cassone is surely a striking instance to the contrary, as the recurring effect of these delicately silhouetted and slightly formalized figures and horses is extremely refined and beautiful.

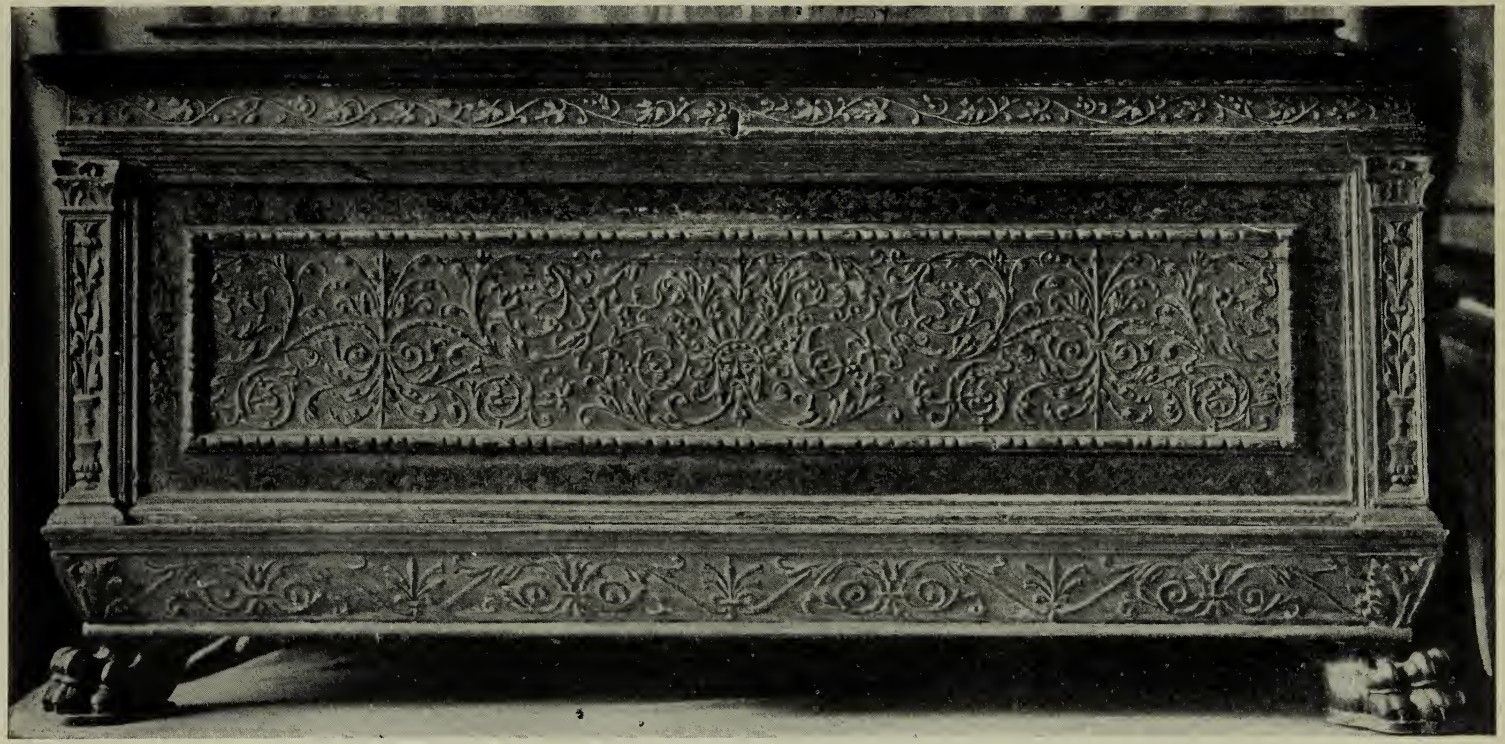
We might be able to discover examples of gesso decoration in which stamped work or moulded work was used for repeating parts, and freehand work for other parts. In the Museum examples the majority seem to have been worked directly with a free hand. There is a fine example of how

[1] Cennino describes a method of cutting stamps in *stone* (Chapter 170) to be used as moulds for figures to be applied to the decoration of chests or coffers, but he speaks of beating tin into these moulds and forming the figures in this way, afterwards backing them or filling them in with gesso grosso, cutting them out and sticking them on the chest with glue, gilding them and adding colour and varnish.

FRONT OF CASSONE IN GILDED GESSO, NO. 727—1884 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM)

gesso lends itself to a bold heraldic treatment in the Museum collection (No. 3—1865), a tournament shield on which a griffin, sable, is emblazoned on a field, or. The sable griffin in bold relief is not only a fine heraldic beast, but is decoratively spaced and relieved upon the gold field, the richness of which is greatly enhanced by the fine raised diaper pattern worked all over it in effective ornamental contrast to the bolder relief and treatment of the charge. It is possible stamps may have been used for the diaper of the field. The work belongs to the second half of the fifteenth century and is from the Palazzo Guadagni, Florence.

One of the charms of gesso work in ornamental effect is the softened, floated, or half melted look given to the forms which take the lustre of gilding so agreeably. This character no doubt is given by the use of the brush in floating or droping on the forms of the ornament. In No. 727—1884 of the Museum collection a particularly rich and dignified ornamental effect is produced by the contrasting allied elements of the figure reliefs in the large lozenge-shaped enclosures, with the rich gilded formal diaper of the heraldic sphinx, or human-headed lion, which, in close repetition, forms the diaper on the main field of the decoration. The raised work in this example has the softened molten or beaten character above spoken of. The marriage coffer (No. 718—1884) is an instance of purely ornamental treatment in raised



MARRIAGE COFFER, NO. 718—1884 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

and gilded gesso on wood, consisting mainly of foliated scroll forms characteristic of the early Italian Renascence work, and here again the raised patterns have the soft rich look, as if the ornament had been squeezed or floated upon the surface of the wood, somewhat in the way in which confectioners squeeze sugar ornaments upon cakes. Sugar, by the way was an occasional ingredient in the preparation of gesso, as Cennino mentions.

No. 247—1894, is a marriage coffer of walnut which has a symmetrically and formally planned scheme of raised decoration in gesso upon its front which suggests an earlier ornamental origin than the actual date of its production, perhaps, given as the end of the fourteenth century, as it resembles in character the textile patterns of the thirteenth century or earlier. The treatment of the gesso relief work is peculiar, and it appears as if an extremely softened, even and almost flattened effect had been aimed at, without any special emphasis on particular parts.

The rich encrusted effect of another treatment of gesso decoration characteristic of later fifteenth century work is shown in the beautiful coffer, No. 58—1867, the painted shields of arms being in ornamental contrast. Here we have an instance of the use of painting to relieve gesso decoration, as distinct from the use of gesso work to enrich the effect in painting.

Gesso decoration was also finely and freely

MARRIAGE COFFER, NO. 247—1894 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

MARRIAGE COFFER, NO. 58—1867 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

COFFER, NO. 9—1890 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

used for small caskets and other objects and with delightful results, as the rich Museum collection again demonstrates.

The coffret, No. 9—1890, is an interesting instance of this adaptability of gesso and the extra-

GESSO BOX, NO. 5757—1859 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

ordinary variety and richness of effect obtainable; almost emulating carved work in the bolder parts of its relief, and yet with a softness and richness of its own. The designs are singularly interesting and spirited, and the whole work fully deserves the encomium suggested by its motto (in Lombardic letters on the lid) "Onesta e bella."

FRONT OF A COFFER, NO. 7830—1861 (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM).

In No. 5757—1859 we have another good example of gesso decoration on a small scale, and its rich ornate effect in a well-balanced distribution of ornament adapted to a circular form, showing the fine sense of scale and quantity in ornament which distinguishes Italian work of this period—the first half of the fifteenth century.

Finally, in my last example (No. 7830—1861), the panel of a coffer belonging to the early sixteenth century, we see another use and treatment of gesso—to soften and enrich the effect of woodcarving and to make a good surface for gilding. The figures here are carved in bold relief and overlaid with a coating of gesso.

All carved work to be gilded was treated in this way with gesso, which greatly softens the effect, giving a smooth surface for the gilding and increases its richness, especially when done over Armenian bole, which we may see was used under the gilding of these raised gesso ornaments generally—another method which is being revived with the general revival of the forgotten arts of design and handicraft in our own time.

NOTE.—With reference to the early use of gesso, the extremely interesting and remarkable recent discoveries of Prof. Flinders Petrie in Egypt in the shape of mummies of the Roman period of the first century A.D., in addition to the light they throw on antique portrait painting, show that gilded gesso enrichment over linen was freely used at that period, some of the masks being moulded, and the ornament apparently stamped, the toes of each mummy being modelled and gilded and burnished, and the wrappings relieved with gilded buttons of gesso.

NOTES ON THE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IN ART

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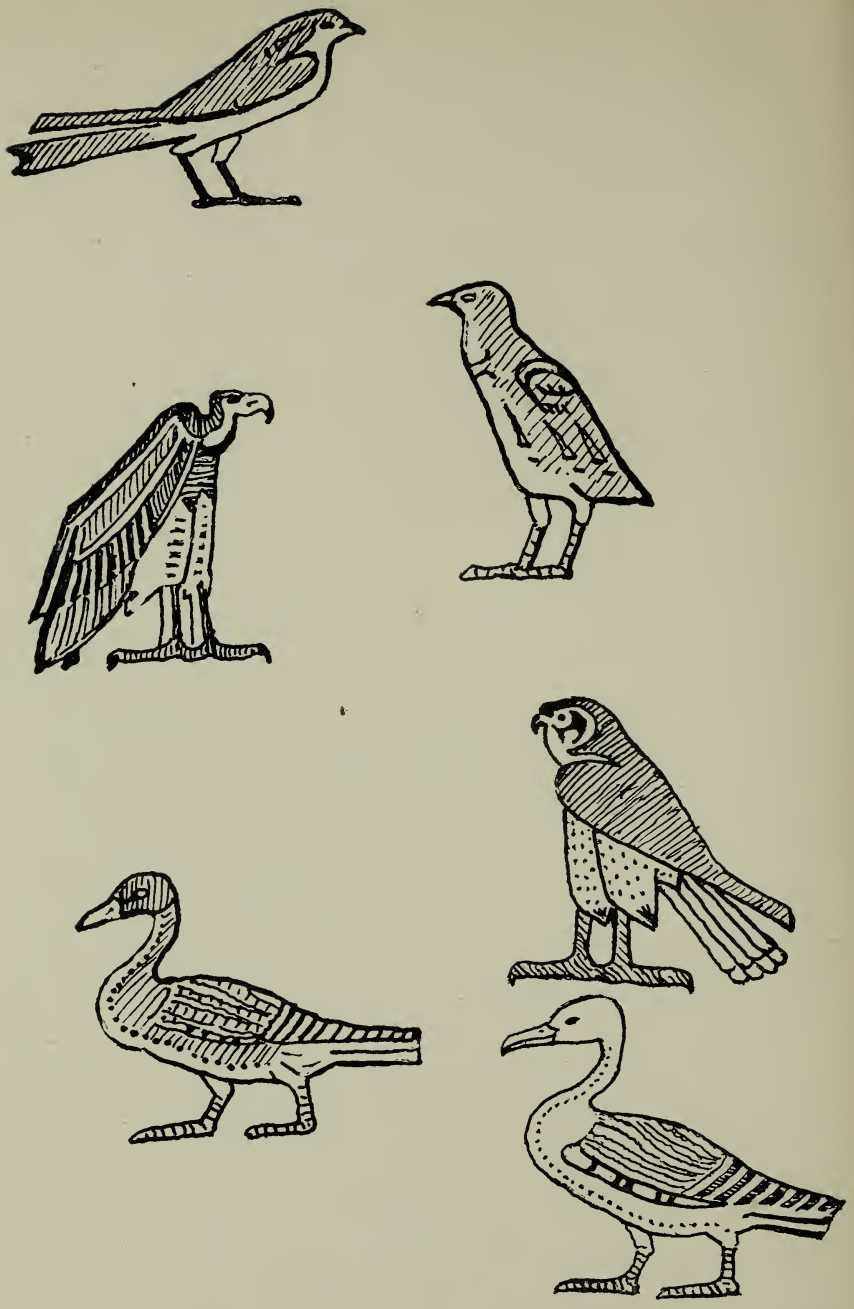
LOOKING back over the vast field of historic art it is obvious that the representation of animals has occupied a very important position —even the prehistoric cave-men display their artistic instinct in animal draughtsmanship, and in that alone, and their naturalistic scratched and incised outlines have set down for us in unerring characterization, the forms of the mastodon, reindeer, and other animals of the primitive hunter.

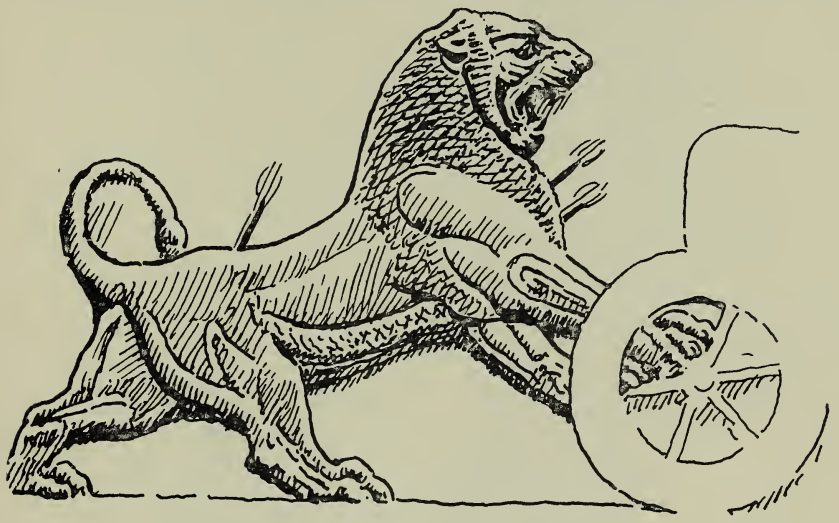
Judging from these relics it would seem as if naturalistic sketching preceded systematic ornamental or decorative treatment of animals in design such as distinguishes the art of the ancient civilizations of the East.

Long before such systematization as we find in ancient Egyptian art, no doubt the power of depicting animals became important in the tribal state, when it was necessary for each tribe to have their distinguishing totem, and to be able to establish their identity or respectability by unmistakable portraits, if not of their ancestors, at least of their protecting animal deities and symbolic progenitors. Nature worship, which became



Egyptian treatment
of birds.
from hieroglyphics of
the 18th Dynasty.
Tombs of the Kings. Thebes.

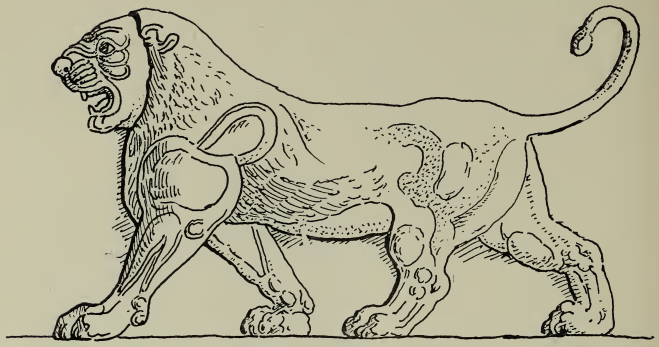
elaborated in a symbolic religious system under the ancient Egyptians, under the conditions of mural and glyptic art led to that severe and dignified formalism combined with essential characterization in the treatment of birds and animals which has never been surpassed and which have given splendid types for the mural painter and



Lion from Assyrian Bas-relief.

sculptor for all time. Heavier and more formal and architectural in their sculptural treatment of symbolic animals, such as the winged bulls which form essential architectural features, the Assyrians, when they came to the treatment of actual scenes of life (such as the lion-hunts of their kings, carved in low relief on the walls of their palaces,) showed a freer and more naturalistic feeling which breaks through a prevailing formalism and con-

vention sometimes with almost startling power, as in the celebrated wounded lioness of the Nineveh slabs in the British Museum.



Persian Lion. from the frieze at Susa
(Perrot & Chipiez)

Lion, from a Theban bas-relief.
(Perrot & Chipiez)

There is a considerable resemblance in treatment between the Assyrian lion in sculpture and the lion of ancient Persia as he appears at the

Graeco-Buddhist Group of Lions carved in marble forming summit of a column excavated at Sarnath nr. Benares

palace of Susa, though, heightened with enamel, the latter acquires a certain decorative and distinctive ferocity. A lion from a Theban bas-relief shows the simpler and more abstract treatment of Egyptian art.

This Perso-Assyrian type of lion might almost be called a central Asian type, and is curiously perpetuated in the well-known supporters of the pillar over the gate of Mycenæ.

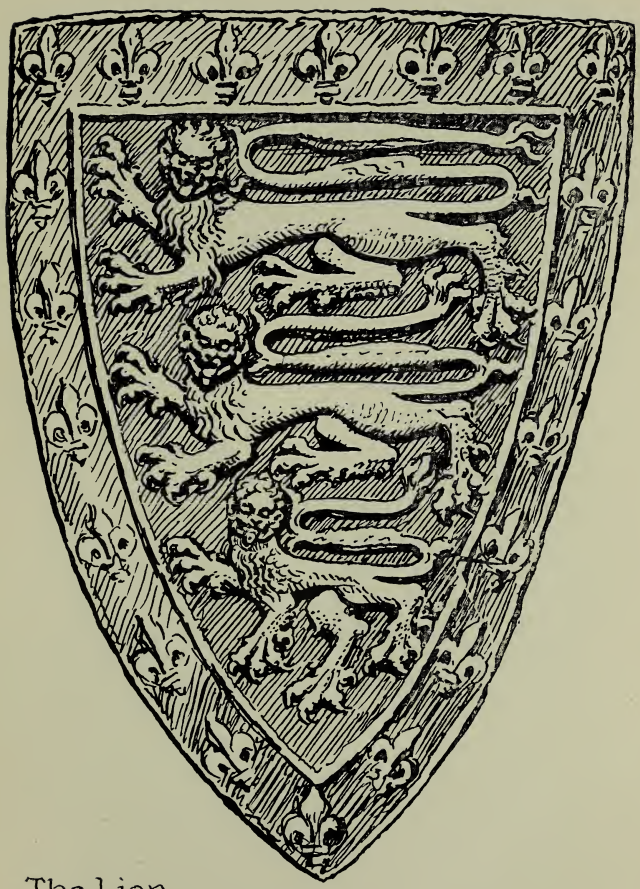
In fact the later Greek lion shows marked traces of his descent from his Asian prototypes. The influence of the same decorative formalism, more especially of the mane and hirsute appendages, is indeed traceable through Byzantine times, from the bronze lion of St. Mark to the heraldic lions of the middle ages. The same influence is seen again in the remarkable group of lions forming the capital of a column discovered at Sarnath near Benares in India, associated with many other sculptures of Graeco-Buddhist origin.

For perfect monumental treatment of horses, when truthful action and vitality are perfectly united with linear rhythm and decorative effect, we must still turn to the pan-athenaic fringe—despite the opinion of the Yorkshire horse-dealer who pronounced them "only damned galloways, not worth ten pounds apiece!" They remain full of life and movement and as examples of most delicate relief sculpture governed by ornamental feeling.

Animal forms
from early Greek pottery

I should just like to mention, while speaking of Greek art, the practice of the early vase painter, who, frequently using animals as his main decorative motive, had a system by which he was able to harmonize many different kinds in, say, a running border, or succession of borders. This was done partly through the influence of the brush and partly by the recognition of typical resemblances even in apparently diverse forms. The basis of unity was the oval or ovoid shape of the bodies of all animals and birds. The vase painter with his ornamental purpose in view exaggerated this resemblance, governing his individual shapes by a sort of invisible volute-like curves, he gained a rhythmic decorative effect without loss of identity in his forms.

With the development of heraldry in mediaeval times we come upon a world of spirited and vividly decorative design in which the forms of animals play a very important part. A very instructive study might be made of the mediaeval heraldic lion alone. The heraldic designer had to be emphatic in his forms, and distinct though simple in characterization. As with the Greek vase painter, profile best served his purpose, and effective silhouette became all important. When the lion is "passant regardant" in mediaeval heraldry the full face has a curiously human character, as in the arms of Prince John at Eltham which Mr. G. W. Eve gives in his "Heraldry as Art."



The Lion
in English heraldry.
Arms of Prince John of Eltham,
Westminster Abbey.

Among the finest examples of the treatment of animals in decorative art of an heraldic and symbolic character are the designs of the twelfth and thirteenth-century textiles, in the celebrated Sicilian silks, or those of Lucca of the fourteenth century. In these fabrics the animal forms are used with the greatest ornamental effect, the conditions of the repeat of the pattern and the exigences of the loom being essential, and, frankly acknowledged, contribute to the character and beauty of the result.

It has always been the frank and workmanlike acceptance of the necessary conditions of the materials and methods of production, which, while defining the character of the treatment, gives both character and beauty to decorative art, and we find this especially true in regard to the treatment of animal forms in all kinds of design.

The pursuit of superficial imitation in modern times, the pictorial aim which includes atmospheric effect and the representation of values, textures, and surfaces, extending its influence over all the arts of design has done much to destroy the dignity, the character, and the decorative reserve of ancient and mediaeval design in the treatment of animals; the so-called naturalistic aim producing palpably absurd effects in sculpture and in heraldry, for instance. With the modern revival of design and knowledge of the handicrafts this mistake has been largely corrected. Artists have discovered

SICILIAN SILK, THIRTEENTH CENTURY (FISHBACH).

SICILIAN SILK, THIRTEENTH CENTURY (FISHBACH).

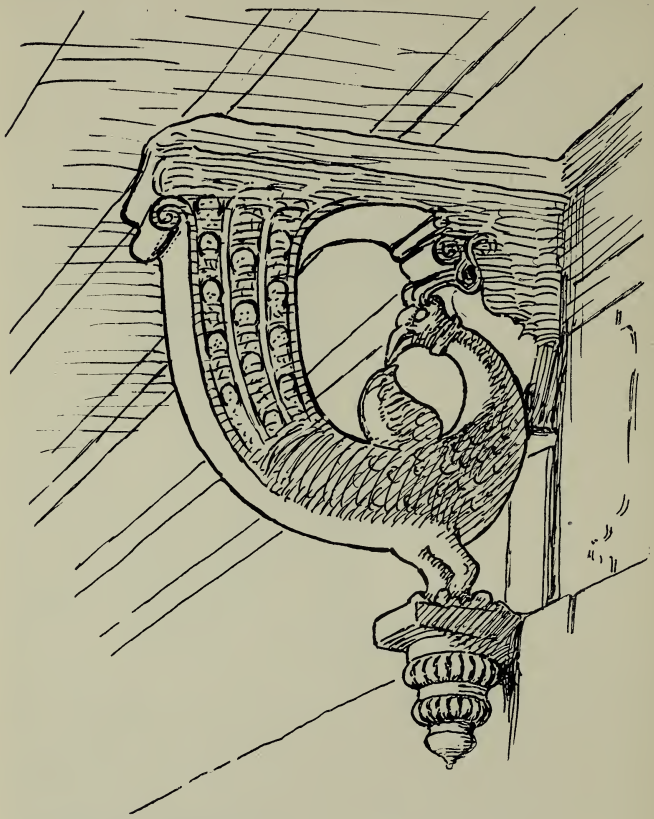
SICILIAN SILK, THIRTEENTH CENTURY (FISHBACH).

the peculiar qualities proper to different materials and processes and their value as means of expression in design is much more generally understood and acknowledged, while fresh study of nature has helped, with these, to make a fresh and appropriate convention in the treatment of animals possible. The Japanese have taught us that marvellous fidelity to nature may be united with decorative effect in the treatment of animals—especially birds and fishes, and that certain facts of structure and surface or colour may become, under skilful treatment, brilliant parts of a design—as the scales of a fish in inlays of pearl, or in lacquer: the plumage of a bird in silk embroidery, or the system of structure of the feathers expressed in the delicate lines of cloisonné enamel. Examples of Chinese art might be referred to also for excellence in the same qualities united with more decorative reserve and dignity.

I have not mentioned Indian art, except the example at Sarnath, which, at least, as regards the Hindu side abounds with examples of the decorative treatment of animals, the temples being frequently a mass of animal life in carving, continuous courses being formed of elephants, horses, and bulls in succession. The peacock, too, being a sacred bird, constantly appears. At the old palace of Man Mandir at Gwalior, Central Provinces, I saw a carved stone bracket in which a peacock had been very effectively treated for

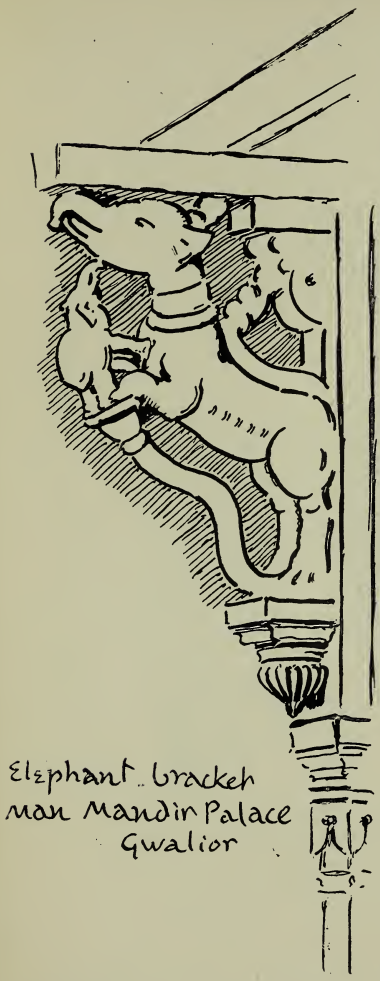
FROM THE "HUNDRED BIRDS" OF BARI.

its constructive purpose: and in the south, at



Peacock bracket.
Man Mandir Palace.
Gwalior.

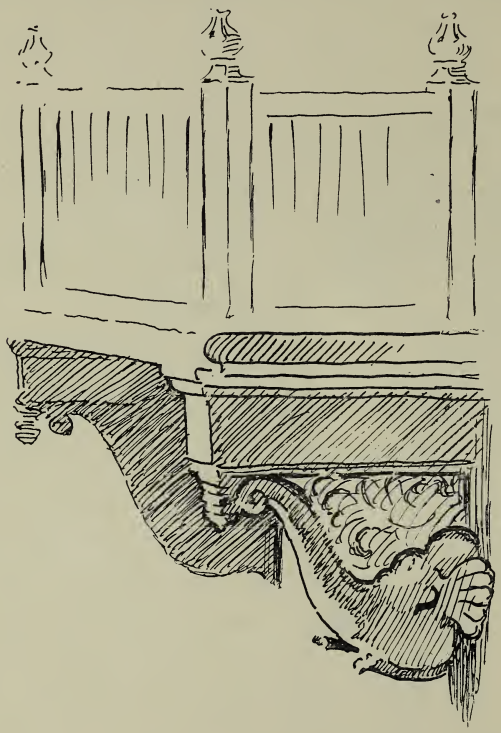
Tanjore, I saw the splendid bird, in the quick, with tail like a sweeping robe, perched upon the



sacred colossal bull which, carved in black stone (or marble, darkened with successive libations of votive oil) reposes in the court of the great temple, and whose living prototype might easily be found drawing an ox-cart in the town.

At Gwalior, too, I noted a treatment of the elephant in a carved stone bracket in the old palace of Man Mandir, which in structure recalled the wondrous columns of the temple at Steerungum at Trichinopoly in the south, though in the latter case the subject is mainly the horseman, but the resemblance is in the arrangement which seems characteristic of Indian (Hindu) carving. At the Guest House, Gwalior, also, elephants' heads were treated ingeniously as

the corbels supporting balconies. It was modern work, but evidently influenced by the carvings in

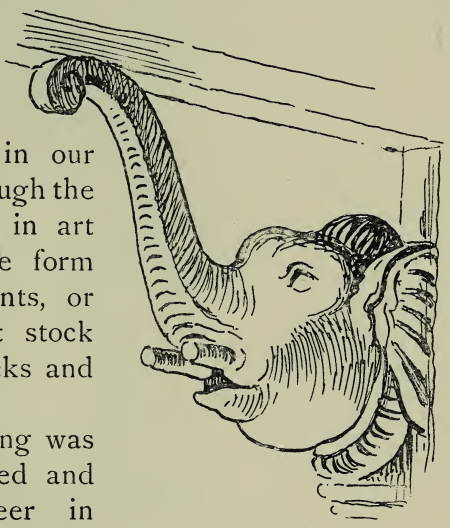


Elephant corbels
Guest House
Gwalior

the old palace above mentioned. There was an abundance of floral carving and geometric pierced work in this Guest House, besides, extremely skil-

ful and beautiful in detail, showing that the modern Hindu architectural carver had by no means lost his cunning. This, of course, was a native state.

One almost wonders that golden images of favourite race-horses are not set up in—well, some of our public places, for it cannot be said that there is no animal worship in our own country, though the votive offerings in art usually take the form of sporting prints, or paintings of fat stock with straight backs and short horns.



ELEPHANT CORBELS, GUEST HOUSE, GWALIOR.

Animal painting was once an honoured and prosperous career in England, and prints after Landseer covered a considerable acreage in the early Victorian epoch. Do not his lions still support Nelson in Trafalgar Square, and perhaps afford some protection to unpopular speakers on that historic plinth? I think, however, most of us would prefer the little lion which was modelled by Alfred Stevens, both as a dignified representation of our National Totem and as an example of native artistic style and treatment.

Lion by Alfred Stevens.
formerly part of the outer
iron railing of the British
Museum.

MODERN ASPECTS OF LIFE AND THE SENSE OF BEAUTY

MODERN ASPECTS OF LIFE AND THE SENSE OF BEAUTY

THAT modern social and economic conditions tend to destroy beauty in the outward aspects of human life and nature: the thesis, thus stated, would seem almost a self-evident proposition; yet I am by no means sure that sensitiveness to beauty —or to its absence—in our daily surroundings is so very common (or even that there is a common understanding as to the idea of beauty) that it would obtain general assent without further explanation; and as I have undertaken to open the case for the prosecution, if I may so term it, I will try to put before you my reasons and conclusions on the matter.

My first witness shall be London, as London is typical and focusses most of the effects of modern social and economic conditions. Now, we hear a great deal of the beauty of London, but probably

those who talk of her beauty are really thinking of certain beauty spots or the picturesqueness of certain favoured localities where the Thames and the parks come in. Vast as London is, most of us really live for the most part in a comparatively small London. Outside our usual haunts lies a vast unknown region, of which indeed occasional glimpses are obtained on being obliged to travel across or through the desert of the multi-county-city.

Those whose London is bounded on the west by Kensington Gardens and on the east by Mayfair, do not figure to themselves Clerkenwell or Ratcliffe Highway, Bethnal Green or Bow, and would not care to embrace the vast new suburbs spreading over the green fields in every direction, or even to notice the comparatively select slums in the shadow of Belgravian mansions. Supposing we approached our metropolis by any of the great railway lines, there is nothing to indicate that we are entering the greatest and wealthiest city in the world. We pass rows and rows of mean dwellings—yellow brick boxes with blue slate lids—crowded close to the railway in many places, with squalid little backyards. We fly over narrow streets, and complex webs and networks of railway lines, and thread our way through telegraph and telephone wires, myriad smoking chimney-pots, steaming, throbbing works of all kinds, sky signs, and the wonders of the parti-coloured poster hoardings—

which pursue one into the station itself, flaring on the reluctant and jaded sight with ever-increasing importunity and iteration, until one recalls the philosopher who remarked "Strange that the world should need so much pressing to accept such apparently obvious advantages!"

Inside the station, however large, all sense of architectural proportion is lost by the strident labels of all sorts and sizes, and banal devices on every scale and in every variety of crude colour, stuck, like huge postage stamps, wherever likely to catch the eye.

The same thing meets us in the streets: in the busier commercial quarters, too, it is a common device to hang the name of the firm in gigantic gilt letters all over the windows and upper stories of the shops; while the shops themselves become huge warehouses of goods, protected by sheets of plate glass, upon the edges of which apparently rest vast superstructures of flats and offices, playfully pinned together by telegraph poles, and hung with a black spider's web of wires, as if to catch any soaring ideas of better things that might escape the *melée* of the street. In the streets a vast crowd of all sorts, sizes and conditions is perpetually hurrying to and fro, presenting the sharpest contrasts in appearance and bearing. Here the spruce and prosperous business man, there the ragged cadger, the club idler, and the out-o'-work; there the lady in her luxurious carriage or motor, in

purple and fine linen, and there the wretched seller of matches.

Modern street traffic, too, is of the most mixed and bewildering kind, and the already too perilous London streets have been made much more so by the motor in its various forms of van and 'bus, business or private car. The aspect of a London street during one of the frequent traffic blocks is certainly extraordinary, so variously sorted and sized are the vehicles, wedged in an apparently inextricable jumble, while the railways and tubes burrowed underground only add fresh streams of humanity to the traffic, instead of relieving it.

Yet it has been principally to relieve the congested traffic of London that the great changes have been made which have practically transformed the town, sweeping away historic buildings and relics of the past, and giving a general impression of rapid scene-shifting to our streets.

The most costly and tempting wares are displayed in the shops in clothing, food, and all the necessities of life, as well as fantastic luxuries and superfluities in the greatest profusion—"things that nobody wants made to give to people who have no use for them"—yet, necessities or not, removed only by the thickness of the plate-glass from the famished eyes of penury and want.

The shops, too, are not workshops. The goods appear in the windows as if by magic. Their producers are hidden away in distant factories,

working like parts of a machine upon portions of wholes which perhaps they never see complete.

Turning to the residential quarters, we see ostentation and luxury on the one hand, and cheap imitation, pretentiousness, or meanness and squalor on the other. We see the aforesaid brick boxes packed together, which have ruined the aspect of most of our towns: we have the pretentious suburban villa, with its visitors' and servants' bells; we have the stucco-porticoed town "mansion," with its squeezy hall and umbrella stand; or we have the "desirable" flat, nearer to heaven, like the cell of a cliff-dweller, where the modern citizen seeks seclusion in populous caravansaries which throw every street out of scale where they rear their Babel-like heads.

I have not spoken of the gloom of older-fashioned residential quarters, frigid in their respectability, which, whatever centres of light and leading they may conceal, seem outwardly to turn the cold shoulder to ordinary humanity, or peep distrustfully at a wicked world through their fanlights.

Many of the features I have described are found also in most modern cities in different degrees, and are still more evident in the United States, where there is nothing ancient to stem the tide of modern—shall we say progress? It is only fair to note, however, that there is a movement in New York, in which leading architects

and artists are joining with municipal reformers, for the preservation of beauty in the better ordering of street improvements, the laying out of public places, and the general recognition of the social importance of harmony and pleasant effect in cities, which has lately found expression in schemes of town-planning and garden cities and suburbs in this country.

Turning from the aspects of their houses to the humans who inhabit them—take modern dress in our search for the beautiful! Well, national if not distinctive costume—except of the working and sporting sort, court dress, collegiate and municipal robes, and uniforms—has practically disappeared, and, apart from working dress in working hours, one type of ceremonial, or full dress is common to the people at large, and that of the plainest kind—with whatever differences and niceties of cut and taste in detail—I mean the type for men, of course.

Among the undisputed rights of women the liberty to dress as she pleases, even under recognized types for set occasions, and with constant variety and change of style, is not a little important, and it is a liberty that has very striking effects upon the aspects of modern life we are considering. It is true, this liberty may be checked by the decrees of eminent *modistes*, and limited by the opinion of Mrs. Grundy, or the frank criticism of the boy in the street; and it is even more than

probable that the exigencies of trade have something to do with it also.

It is, however, too important an element in the *ensemble* of life to be ignored or undervalued in any way, as women's dress affords one of the few opportunities of indulging in the joy of colour that is left to civilization.

Men suffer the tyranny of the tall silk hat as the outward and visible sign of respectability—surely a far more obvious one nowadays than Carlyle's "gig." "Gigmanity" has become top-hat-manity. The "stove-pipe" is the crown of the modern king—financier—the business man—*He* "who must be obeyed." I understand it is still as much as a city clerk's place is worth for him to appear in any other head-gear. Ladies, too, encourage it, with the black-frock coat and the rest of the funereally festive attire of modern correct mankind. I suppose the garb is considered to act as an effective foil to the feast of colour indulged in by the ladies, and that it may act as a sort of black framing to fair pictures—black commas, semi-colons, or full-stops, agreeably punctuating passages of delicate colour!

The worst of it is that the beauty of woman's dress, when it happens to follow or revive a fashion with great possibilities of beauty, as at present, seems to be a matter almost of accident, and entirely at the mercy of the mode (or the trade?)—here to-day and gone to-morrow; and, alas, lovely

woman, our only hope for variety in colour and form in modern life, in her determination to descend into the industrial and professional arena and compete commercially with men, not unfrequently shows a tendency to take a leaf out of her rival's tailor's pattern-book, and to adopt or adapt more or less of the features of modern man's prosaic, though possibly convenient and durable, but certainly summary and unromantic attire.

Well, I think, on the whole, the pictures which modern life in London or any great capital discloses may be striking in their contrasts, vivid in their suggestions, dramatic or tragic in their aspects—anything or everything, in fact, *except* beautiful; except, of course, in so far as accidental effects of light and atmosphere are beautiful, mainly, perhaps, because they disguise or transfigure actually unlovely form and substance.

The essential qualities of beauty being harmony, proportion, balance, simplicity, charm of form and colour, can we expect to find much of it in conditions which make life a mere scramble for existence for the greater part of mankind? Bellamy, in his "Looking Backward," gives a striking and succinct image of modern social and economic conditions in his illustration or allegory of the coach and horses. The coach is Capitalism. It carries a minority, but even these struggle for a seat, and to maintain their position, frequently falling off, when they either go under altogether,

or must help to pull the coach with the majority toiling in the traces of commercial competition.

However these conditions may, among individuals, be softened by human kindness, or some of their aspects modified by artistic effort, they do not change the cruelty or injustice of the system, or its brutal and ugly aspects in the main.

But if modern civilization is only tolerable in proportion to the number and facility of the means of escape from it, perhaps we may find at least the beauty of the country and of wild nature unimpaired?

Do we? We may escape the town by train or motor—running the risk in either case of a smash—but we cannot escape commercial enterprise. The very trees and houses sprout with business cards, and the landscape along some of our principal railway lines seems owned by the vendors of drugs. Turning away our eyes from such annoyances, commercial enterprise, again, has us in all sorts of alluring announcements of all sorts and sizes in innumerable newspapers and magazines, which, like paper kites, can only maintain their position by extensive tails. The tail—that is, the advertisement sheets—keeps the kite flying—and the serial tale keeps the advertisers going, perhaps, also. Anyhow, the gentle reader is obliged to take his news and views, social or political, sandwiched or flavoured with very various and

unsought and unwanted condiments, pictorial or otherwise. Thus, public attention is diverted and —nobody minds! But it is in these insidious ways that that repose or detachment of mind favourable to the sense of beauty is destroyed, and thus, to put it in another way, we are in danger of losing our lives, or the best that life can give, in getting our living—or, well, perhaps it might be true to say in some cases, a substantial percentage on our investments.

In obedience, too, to the requirements of the great god Trade, whole districts of our fair country are blighted and blackened, and whole populations are made dependent upon mechanical, monotonous, and often dangerous toil to support the international commercial race for the precarious world-market.

Under the same desperate compulsion of commercial competition, agriculture declines, and the country side is deserted. The old country life, with its festivals and picturesque customs, has disappeared. Old houses, churches, and cottages have tumbled into ruin, or have suffered worse destruction by a process of smartening up called "restoration." The people have crowded into the overcrowded towns, increasing the competition for employment, the chances of which are lessened by the very industry of the workers themselves, and so our great cities blindly become huger, more dangerous, and generally unlovely, losing, too, by

degrees their relics of historic interest and romance they once possessed.

Even in the art-world, and among the very cultivators of beauty we detect the canker of commercialism. The compulsion of the market rules supply and demand, and the dealer becomes more and more dominant. The idea of the shop dominates picture shows, and painters become almost as specialized as men of science, while genius, or even ordinary talent, requires as much puffing as a patent medicine. Everyone must have his trade label, and woe to the artist who experiments, or discovers capacities in himself for other things than his label covers.

Every new and sincere movement in art has been in direct protest and conflict with the prevailing conditions, and has measured its progress by its degree of success in counteracting them, and, in some sense, producing new conditions. The remarkable revival of the handicrafts, or arts and crafts movement, of late years may be quoted as an instance; but it is a world within a world; a minority producing for a minority; although the movement has done valuable work even as a protest, and has raised the banner of handwork and its beauty in an age of machine industry.

Other notable movements of a protesting, protective, or mitigating nature are at work in the form of societies for the protection of ancient

buildings, for the preservation of historic spots and the beauty of natural scenery, for the abolition or abatement of the smoke nuisance, for checking the abuses of public advertisement, for the increase of parks and open spaces, and for spreading the love of art among the people.

Indeed, it would seem as if the welfare of humanity and the prospects of a tolerable life under modern conditions were handed over to such societies, since it does not seem to be anybody's business to attend to what should be everybody's business, and we have not even a minister to look after such interests. The very existence of such societies, however, is a proof of the danger and destruction to which beauty is exposed under modern conditions.

Social conditions are the outcome of economic conditions. In all ages it has been the system under which property is held—the ownership of the means of production and exchange—which has decided the forms of social life. The expansion of capital and the power of the financier are essentially modern developments, as also is unrestricted commercial competition, though this seems to lead to monopoly—a heretofore unexpected climax. Modern existence in such circumstances becomes an unequal race or scramble for money, place, power, or mere employment. The social (or rather *un*social) pressure which results really causes those sordid aspects, pretences, aggressions, and brutal

contrasts we deplore. Private ownership is constantly opposed to public interest. The habit of regarding everything from the narrow point of view of money value and immediate profit as the determining factors in all transactions obscures larger issues and stultifies collective action for the public good.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury of public opinion, perhaps I have said enough to support the case of beauty against modern social and economic conditions. I do not ask for damages—they are incalculable. She stands before you, a pathetic figure, obscured in shreds and patches, driven from pillar to post, disinherited, a casual, and obliged to beg her bread, who should be a welcome and an honoured guest in every city and country, and in every house, bearing the lamp of art and bringing comfort and joy to all.

A SHORT SURVEY OF THE ART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

WITH SOME NOTES ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A SHORT SURVEY OF THE ART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, CHIEFLY IN ENGLAND, WITH SOME NOTES ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A HUNDRED years is but an arbitrary division of time, and yet one cannot help investing the centuries with a sort of personality as they pass, each distinguished by certain characteristics, particular movements, and habits of thought as well as of life and its aspects, and above all by the spirit and forms of the art to which they have given birth.

If we could summon a typical figure with proper accessories to illustrate each epoch we should get a vivid if somewhat symbolical idea of the varying phases of thought and art, and the passing fashions in taste which the past has witnessed.

Few centuries, perhaps, would be more difficult

to comprehend in a single figure than the nineteenth, displaying as it does in the course of its history so many diversities—revolutions we might say—in artistic development.

In its early years, inheriting its taste and fashions from the eighteenth century, when handicraft was still the principal means for the production of things of both use and adornment, the nineteenth century has witnessed a complete revolution in commercial and industrial conditions, with the development of the factory system, competition, and the demands of the world-market. It has seen the great machine industries take the place of the former minute subdivision of labour, and in the process of both subdivision of labour and the development of machine industry all forms of production have been affected.

The former local centres of supply have disappeared with self-dependent homesteads and village industries, and with the decline of handicraft traditions of design and construction have been in this country well-nigh completely broken, except in some trades, such as the cartwright's and the wheelwright's and the harness maker's. We still see in our beautiful country wagons the chamfers and ogee forms in the woodwork and the gay painting of mediaeval times, and our noble shire horses are often brave with bright brass ornaments which perpetuate traditional patterns, moulded or pierced; while the descendants of Wayland Smith

still ply their trade at the village forge, though mainly limited to horseshoes.

But machine industry and the factory and production for profit rather than for use, having nearly extinguished all sense of art and individual taste in the useful arts which contribute to the comfort and decoration of the home, in the later years of the century, seem to have evoked, by the mere force of reaction and revulsion of feeling, that remarkable revival of decorative design and handicraft which has distinguished its closing years, under the influence of which many beautiful crafts have been successfully recovered and practised with success, while trade itself has not been slow to derive new ideas from the Arts and Crafts movement.

The main principles inspiring the promoters of this movement have been the unity of the arts allied with and controlled by architecture, and the due acknowledgement of the artistic responsibility of the designer and craftsman.

With regard to the architecture of the nineteenth century we may see nearly every past fashion of its history revived in turn, until some of our eclectic architects seem to have evolved something like a characteristic domestic style, at least, characteristically mixed in its constructive and decorative features, but certainly adapted to modern requirements.

The classical forms in building, which attained

a certain heaviness and Dutch plainness under the Georges, underwent a transformation with the revival of Greek and Roman taste in the Empire period. From that time onward classical columns and pilasters and classical details of varying proportions became embedded, as it were, in our domestic architecture, and as a consequence the more-or-less-Doric portico still dominates large residential districts of London. Their columned ranks, however, have latterly been greatly broken in some quarters by the cheerful red brick fronts and white sashes of the Queen Anne revival, which have, in some instances, in response to the demand for "residential flats," even got upon stilts and nod at us from the many-gabled top stories of the modern caravansary.

Street architecture in later Victorian days became a masquerade in building materials, since the design of the façade bears little or no relation to the hidden structure of steel framing by which our many-storied piles are held together, while, apparently, when there are shops on the ground floor the whole mass has the effect of playfully reposing upon the edges of great sheets of plate glass.

The use of terra-cotta, or cut-brick enrichments have been a welcome relief from the doleful gentility of the white brick, or the depressing gray stucco which has cast a peculiar gloom over some respectable neighbourhoods.

In church architecture the Gothic revivalists have carried all before them. At one period of the nineteenth century, indeed, when the restoring zeal was at its height and nothing was acceptable but something "early English," there was considerable reason to fear that the architects would leave nothing behind them!

But we have had really distinguished work from men like Butterfield (the architect of All Saints, Margaret Street) William Burges, and J. D. Sedding, while domestic architecture both in town and country has been developed on new lines by Mr. Norman Shaw, Mr. Philip Webb, and their able followers of the younger generation.

In sculpture we may trace an analogous line of development, from the severe, graceful, but somewhat cold classical style of Flaxman and the more dramatic Canova, or the sentiment of Thorvaldsen, freezing into the later classicism of Gibson on the one hand, or breaking out into the realisms and trivialities of the modern Italian School. In England, inspired by the study of nature and cultivation of style chiefly under the influence of the works of Phidias and the Florentine masters of the fifteenth century, a school of considerable distinction and force has arisen. We had one, at least, really great master in Alfred Stevens standing almost alone as a modern expositor of renascence traditions. He has been succeeded by men of taste and refinement like the late Onslow Ford,

or the accomplishment, beauty of design, and vigour of expression of the late Harry Bates, not to mention living exponents of sculpture quite as distinguished. Among the younger school the continental influence of Meunier and of Rodin may be noted.

To continue our rapid and necessarily imperfect survey, in the field of painting, again, the course of development through changes of feeling and aim is even more emphatically marked, as might be expected from that most sensitive and impressionable of the arts.

The domination of the older Academic traditions in artistic education and practice was only broken fitfully in the first quarter of the century by such meteoric influences as that of William Blake, who with his vivid and inspired vision of a world of spiritual, imaginative, and symbolic beauty was in open revolt against the classical coldness and the conscious prettinesses and pretences of his time in art, as well as against the prosaic calculating spirit of a commercial epoch.

Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough as well as Hogarth left their mark on the methods in English painting and raised a standard of workmanship in the eighteenth century which has not since been approached in the same direction, though many charming artists in the figure and landscape, such as George Morland, succeeded them; while later we have the anecdotic and

incident pictures of David Wilkie which established a characteristic British type.

The remarkable work of J. M. W. Turner is perhaps more characteristic of the first half of the nineteenth century than that of any other English painter. Trained in the restricted and reserved methods of the early landscape school learned from Italy and France, with extraordinary industry and facility as a draughtsman, and a keen sense of composition, his development under different influences, from the classical landscape school of Claude Lorraine and Nicolas Poussin to the romantic feeling of Titian and Salvator Rosa, or the quiet pathos and precision of touch of the Dutch masters, and above all of the close and constant observation of nature in all her varying moods, and in nearly all European countries, may be seen in the unrivalled record of work he has left, and in the splendid collection in the National Gallery.

Turner seems to express the general movement of the half-century's life and moods of thought more completely than any other artist. Classical, romantic, mythological, naturalistic, impressionistic, in turn; from the serene atmosphere, lucent skies, and deep umbrage of classical landscapes, with their nymphs and shepherds, we may follow the course of his mind to the "Rain, Steam, and Speed" of the Great Western Railway.

It is a wide reach, but Turner's art illuminates

the smoke and the stir and stress of the industrial and revolutionary nineteenth century, like a rainbow spanning a stormy sky.

And what of its last fifty years? They have seen the rise, formation and decline of the pre-Raphaelite School. That strong and earnest movement emanating from a small group of enthusiastic young painters, seeking sincerity of expression with thoroughness of workmanship and profound study of nature. The names of Holman Hunt, J. E. Millais, D. G. Rossetti and Ford Madox Brown and Frederick Sandys will always be associated with this important epoch in English painting. Their works have exercised a potent influence far beyond their own immediate circle, and have affected many different developments, forming the root and stem as it were of many different branches.

To this source (whether as reactive or related influences) we may trace back the two chief and vital distinctive directions into which modern painting may be broadly divided—impressionism on the one hand and the pursuit of decorative beauty tinged with poetic feeling and romance on the other, this latter being allied with a further important movement concerned with the revival of design and the artistic handicrafts, known as the Arts and Crafts movement.

With this the names of William Morris and Burne-Jones will always be associated, and they

both link hands with the original group of the pre-Raphaelites.

Among later influences upon art generally that of the Japanese cannot be left out of account as its effects have been considerable in many directions and may be said to have had an enormous influence upon the art of Whistler. Despite, however, the marvellous skill of Japanese craftsmanship, owing to the fantastic spirit of their design, and the absence of the steadying and controlling influence of stone construction in their architecture, their art has had more effect upon our impressionistic school than upon our arts and craftsmen, and it is rather by the work of the latter type and the movement it represents that the art of the close of the last century is more distinctively characterized.

The study of Japanese art, however, leads us back to its source in the graver and more serious art of China, where its prototypes may be found in nobler forms.

The opening of the twentieth century has brought great changes—changes in the aspects of life, changes in the temper of the nation. Action and reaction which govern the world, also influence the world of thought and of art. The pendulum of taste swings between the classic and the romantic moods and modes. It has of late swung again towards the classical side and manifests itself, as regards decoration, in the vogue of plain white

walls, classical columns and pilasters and cornices, and an almost puritan fear of any other kind of ornament. When colour and pattern *are* indulged in they mostly show a reversion to the fashions of the early Victorian age of French origin or pre-Morrisian types. What was once denounced as hideous has now become old fashioned enough to be found historically interesting.

In painting, what might be termed a cult of the ugly, indeed, seems to have fascinated many of our vigorous artists. This may be the result of a reaction against early Victorian prettiness, and quasi-classical elegance. There has also been a decadent influence at work in our latter-day art. This also manifested itself in that strange decorative disease known as "L'Art Nouveau," which some writers have actually asserted was the offspring of what properly considered was really its antithesis —the Morris school of decoration. Some of the forms of "L'Art Nouveau" may have been the result of the translation into continental modes of some kinds of British, or rather Scottish, design, initiated by certain designers of the Glasgow school, and it is in this direction, I think, that we should be more likely to discover its true genesis. To father it on the Morris school is much as if one were to say that impressionism was a development of the pre-Raphaelite movement, whereas it was a reaction. The followers of both schools, no doubt, sought to restate natural fact or phase,

but on totally different principles and in absolutely opposed terms of art.

With the passing of the impressionist masters, again, we see a counter movement in what are called the "post impressionists." Here, again, principles, methods of conception, observation, selection, and execution are totally different. There are many different individualities, and their works are so diverse that it can hardly be considered a concerted movement in painting, though, regarded collectively, it appears to be a reaction against previously accepted canons or standards in art. Yet curiously enough there are suggestions of the influence of early Byzantine work and of Roman mosaic in the work of some of these painters, the mosaic method of producing form and colour by the juxtaposition of small tesserae or cubes, being actually followed as closely as possible in some instances, by laying on paint in small squares or parallelograms. By such means a certain effect of vibrating light is obtained, but it seems rather a misapplication of the method, and would be more satisfactory to work in actual mosaic and for the artist to avail himself of the decorative beauty which the conditions of working in that material would give.

The movement, so far as it is sincere, appears to be a reflex in art of the feeling which is apt to possess members of a civilized community occasionally—the feeling which urges a man to break

away from the restraints and formalities, as well as the comforts and luxuries of modern life, and seek a return to nature or the bed-rock of existence in the backwoods, or some primitive country, where a simple life is possible.

It also reflects a view which has a certain influence among educationalists—a desire to realize and to possess the unprejudiced unprepossessed attitude of a child's mind and its outlook and vision of nature and life. There is a charm in the *naïveté* of primitive art of all kinds which is akin to the charm we often find in children's drawings. In seeking to cultivate artificially such a mental attitude and its expression in art, however, there is the danger of affectation, and even the sincerest efforts in that direction may give the impression of being affected; also, when, as is nearly always the case in our time, the question of art becomes hopelessly mixed up with the question of commercialism, and personal interests, and crossed by waves of fashionable caprice, like the wind blowing where it listeth, it becomes exceedingly difficult to discover the proverbial "hair" which "perhaps divides the false and the true."

Another point to be noted is this, that whereas the trend of impressionism in art has been towards the opposite pole to conscious and formal design, among some of the painters of the newer school there appears to be a feeling towards its recovery to some extent, at least, there is evidence of the

desire to regard a picture as a pattern of colour which necessarily involves some sort of arrangement. This may be some indication of a return to sanity and a desire to restore the art of painting as an art of design.

But over and above all these movements and varieties the desire for something antique seems to be dominant. The old masters eclipse the moderns in painting; and in decoration and furniture, if genuine old work is not to be had, the closest imitation is in demand, and the tone of time must, if possible, be anticipated in counterfeit. Mr. Hardcastle, in "She Stoops to Conquer," would be quite in fashion with his old house and everything old in it.

Apart from the trade interests no doubt concerned, this love of antiquity growing side by side with the most rapid development of mechanical invention and the consequent transformation of the aspects and habits of life, is a curious fact and seems to show, so far as it is genuine, the growth of an unsatisfied historic sense or feeling for romance, which at one time seemed threatened with extinction in a utilitarian world.

This taste for antiquity in all things, however, is often very artificial in its manifestations, and does not lead to any keener appreciation of good contemporary art, but rather encourages the simulation of past styles than original invention, which does not seem quite healthy.

Another recent development is the taste for pageantry. This is in itself another indication of the revival of the love of romance and antiquity, perhaps, and may to some extent have also encouraged that revival.

Certainly in pageantry we have a popular and picturesque means of vivifying past history, and encouraging a knowledge of and pride in the story of their own country among our people which could hardly be gained from the study of books or pictures alone. Historic episodes arranged in dramatic form enacted by living men and women, with all the vivid effect of life and movement, and heightened by all the resources of costume and heraldry and accessories proper to each period, the scenes, too, taking place in the open air, with green swards, noble trees, and the wide sky for proscenium leave an ineffaceable impression upon the eyes and minds of the spectators.

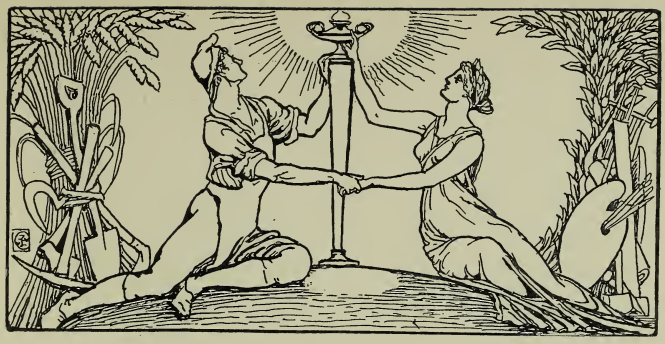
But what is wanted is a wider appeal. We might make the pageant a means of centralizing and unifying national life. We should not be content to limit such shows to a means of raising money for charitable objects, or as an expensive amusement for the few; we should aim at making our pageants free public spectacles in which the people themselves should co-operate. Mr. Frank Benson and Mr. Frank Lascelles have done and are doing excellent work in this direction. Every town might have its commemorative processions

in celebration of certain important local historic events, especially such as illustrate the growth of the great structure of English Freedom.

If we consider the amount of artistic and archaeological knowledge, the training and discipline involved, the opportunities for personal distinction, and the cultivation of the sense of beauty in the externals of life, we have in the pageant a very important educational factor of far-reaching influence, and a powerful means of unifying public sentiment and public spirit, and fostering the national character.

ART AND THE COMMONWEAL

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT ARMSTRONG COLLEGE TO THE STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL OF ART



ART AND THE COMMONWEAL

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT ARMSTRONG COLLEGE, NEWCASTLE, TO THE STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL OF ART

ART in our time is regarded from many different points of view—for intance, (1) as an accessory in general education—generally some way after the fact; or (2) as the servant or slave of commerce and industry; or (3) as a polite amusement for persons of leisure; or (4) as a profession or means of livelihood; (5) as a luxury only for persons of wealth and leisure; or (6) as an investment or speculation; or (7) as a necessity of life and its indispensable accompaniment and means of record and expression.

Art may be, and indeed actually is, each and all of these at the present moment, but, apart from economic and other considerations, the latter is the larger and truer view of the function of art, and it

necessarily, too, includes the first, or educational value, which cannot be over estimated.

The education of the eye is second to none in importance if we consider it fully in all its bearings, but this is far from being generally sufficiently realized (or ugliness might come to be considered a crime), and as the first avenue of human intelligence—though the mouth perhaps might make out a case for priority, its interests are singularly neglected. It is true we have the words "unsightly" and "eyesore," which seem to recognize that the eye is capable of being affronted or distressed or even wounded by hideous objects; this perhaps is something, but for all that the eye has to be a very tolerant organ in these days.

The best test of power or accuracy of observation is drawing, and power of drawing is the basis of all art, which might in all its varieties be described as different kinds or degrees of drawing; what is painting but drawing in colour and tone? What is modelling but drawing in relief or in three dimensions? What is weaving pattern but drawing in textile? And so with each artistic craft by means of which beautiful form and colour is created, each after its manner is a method of drawing, and, as a matter of fact, each is actually based on a drawing as a preliminary stage of its existence.

Great, then, is drawing. It has now taken a place in our ordinary educational course as a "compulsory subject" although it must be said that amid the in-

numerable subjects with which the modern student is expected to be crammed a very small proportion of time is generally allowed for its pursuit—a pursuit indeed which generally ends in catching it like a mouse, by the tail, for it appears that about two hours a week is the time spent in the drawing classes of some colleges. This does not seem to give much chance to either teacher or student of drawing! Nevertheless, as one who has examined the results of such drawing, a certain power of simple definition of form in an abstract way appears to be acquired,—the capacity, varying a good deal, to give in simple bold chalk outline the salient characteristics of some common object, or living form, such as a piece of pottery, a flower, a bird, a fish. Even regarded merely as an aid to the comprehension of an object or subject, drawing is obviously of the greatest practical use. In the newer methods of teaching to read the word is accompanied by the pictured object, for mere brain-puzzling has no place in any national educational system.

It has been said that the *worst* drawing of an object gives a clearer idea of it than the best verbal description. That seems rather rough on literature! But there is a good deal of truth in it. It is just this definiteness of statement in a drawing which makes it so valuable an exponent of form and detail, whereby its services become indispensable in demonstration and description, and there-

fore invaluable to all teachers. If anyone can draw an object in ground-plan, in elevation, in longitudinal and transverse section, and give its appearance in silhouette and in light and shade, he will not only learn all about the form, character and construction of the thing, but will be able to impart his knowledge to others.

To begin with, then, from the purely practical point of view and regarded as an aid in education, the chief aim in the study of drawing is to acquire knowledge of form and fact and the power of describing or demonstrating them. We cannot therefore be too definite and need not be afraid of being hard, even from the art-student's point of view. Studies should be studies, thorough and searching. But drawing, pursued as an introduction to the world of art, may lead the student on through a course of practically endless evolution and development, as he perceives that it is indeed a language of a most sensitive and varied kind, of many styles and methods, which, though beginning with simple statements of fact and form, may become in gifted hands an instrument of the most powerful or delicate feeling and an exponent of character and a vehicle of the imagination, having a rhythm and beauty peculiar to itself. Consider the amount of beauty that has been expressed by means of outline alone, from early Egyptian work to the exquisite figures of the Greek vase painter, or to the flowers and birds of Japanese artists. In these instances, as in all

the best, drawing is united with design,—only another kind of drawing. We happen to have the words Drawing and Design in our language, and they signify distinct things, because of course there is drawing which may be simply copying or transcript, and there is drawing allied to invention and imagination, drawing with the mind, with ideas as well as with the eye and hand, which becomes design. I heard of an artist endeavouring to define design the other day, and he said. "Well, you make *a think,* and then you draw a line round it." It is certainly thought that makes the difference.

When we come to composition we perceive that line has a further function and significance, and it becomes an important factor in that harmonizing, unifying process which is involved in making a design of any kind. This is not merely an indulgence in idle or aimless fancy, but is the outcome, over and above its imaginative quality, of meeting certain conditions, such as the object and purpose of the work, its material, and the necessities of its production. There is a certain logic, too, in the language of line which the designer is bound to observe, and he soon sees that in committing himself to a particular form or system of line in his design of composition that form cannot stand alone but has to be counterbalanced, led up to, and allied with corresponding lines and forms, or perhaps emphasized by contrasts,

Now in pictorial composition or anything of that nature, a design is complete in itself, the plain surface-panel canvas, or paper it covers, determines, its proportions and definite limits and the only necessary technical considerations resolve themselves into the necessity of unity with itself and suitability to the process employed. But whereas the pictorial artist or picture painter carries his own work through to completion, is designer and craftsman in one; in short, the designer for some industrial purpose, unless he is his own craftsman, must make his design also a working drawing to conform to certain strict technical conditions, such as the nature of the material and the method of reproduction, certain limits of size and number of colours to be used and so forth. His work is not complete in itself, but is a draft for a process of manufacture, and depends for its ultimate success, beyond what beauty it may possess, upon the completeness with which the technical requirements have been met and upon the co-operative labour of perhaps a multitude of craftsmen.

With the establishment of modern competitive capitalistic commerce and industry, the factory system, division of labour, and machinery, designer and craftsman have been widely separated, to the detriment of both. Shops are no longer workshops, but only *dépôts* for the display of the finished products of industry, so that the public

remain largely in ignorance of how and where and under what conditions things are made. Even building, which was said to be the only craft carried on under the public eye, is now largely a mysterious process developed behind hoardings and posters. As to machinery, I do not deny that it has its uses or that wonderful (and sometimes fearful) things have been produced; the commercial output is prodigious, in fact, modern existence has come to depend upon machinery in nearly every direction, but the machines themselves remain as a rule far more wonderful things than the things they produce, and the less machinery has to do with art the better. Machinery has been called "labour-saving," but the immediate result of its introduction has been to throw people out of work—labour-saving in the sense of taking their work from them, or the bread out of their mouths. Profit-making being the real object of modern manufacture, the cheapening of the cost of production becomes more important than human lives. Everything appears to be sacrificed to the Moloch of Trade, which, according to our public men, is the *one* object of a nation's life. Yet trade on the competitive system is devouring itself—or being devoured by monopoly, which again devours the people. There seems some danger of humanity being considered to exist for trade and not trade for the service of humanity.

The old idea of a self-supporting country pro-

ducing the necessities of life for its own use seems only appreciated by Socialists.

These thoughts bring one to that aspect of art I spoke of at the outset, as the servant or slave of commerce and industry.

Until the revival of design and handicraft in this country during the last twenty-five or thirty years, decorative design, despite a few distinguished artists, such as Alfred Stevens, might certainly be described as the slave of commerce, and even now the revivers of design and handicraft are not altogether free from the danger of being devoured by commercial methods.

However, a protest has been made, the hand and the brain have asserted themselves; a new standard in the decorative arts has been set up, and since the time of William Morris and his group of pioneers, many English artists and craftsmen have shown that they have successfully revived and can do beautiful work in many forgotten crafts.

In founding the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society we desired to give opportunities of personal distinction for artistic work in design and craftsmanship, to put designers and craftsmen in the same position as other artists, such as painters and sculptors, before the public in this respect by giving the names of all responsible executants of a work. Here, again, trade interests and competitive commerce have been against us, although commerce has not been slow to imitate or adapt

some of the ideas in taste and design discovered in our exhibitions.

However, the movement has spread all over the country, Arts and Crafts Societies and Exhibitions flourish everywhere, and the art schools of the country have been largely reorganized and craft classes established in connection with design. After many years' work some of us think that so remarkable a movement might attain something like national recognition, and its progress or permanence not be left to depend upon the efforts of a few hard-working artists, with ever-diminishing opportunities for exhibition, in the absence of a suitable building. Painting and sculpture, and in a lesser degree architecture, are officially recognized and housed rent free at Burlington House. Why should the decorative arts have nowhere to lay their heads?

After all, it is these arts, intimately connected as they are with a people's daily life and well-being, that may be said to be really of more immediate consequence than what are called the Fine Arts. Though, personally, I do not admit the justice of the distinction usually accepted between *Fine* and Decorative or Industrial Art.

Art is a language—of many dialects it may be, but its greatness must not be measured by inches, or the power or beauty of its thoughts and conceptions determined by the material or method of their expression. The spirit of art, imagination,

romance, and the sense of beauty may inspire the smaller accessories of life as they may the larger. It is not a question of size or quantity, it is a question of quality.

As regards the art schools of the country, both state-aided and municipal, whatever their shortcomings, it is only fair to say that they have been from their establishment the only means, outside the efforts of individual artists, of maintaining a standard of artistic taste and accomplishment in decorative art, as distinct from the influences of trade and fashion.

It has often been made a reproach that they have not been in closer touch and association with the industries of the country, but schools of art and technology cannot be turned into factories with the sole object of supplying the immediate demands of ephemeral fashion—often trivial and vulgar. This would only end in the raising of a crop of narrow specialists, incapable of producing more than one sort of thing, to be exploited by commerce, and unemployed when the boom was over. The business of a school of art is to train capable designers and craftsmen, competent both to practise and to teach. The progress, both in taste and accomplishment, shown by the works exhibited every year in the national competition under the auspices, first of the old Science and Art Department and now of the Board of Education at South Kensington, is most remarkable and

striking, especially to one who can look back twenty or thirty years. Yet we are still without a proper building in which to show these works, which are generally housed in temporary sheds in an out-of-the-way corner, and consequently attract little public attention.

Turning now to the more theoretical side of art, and regarding its general purport and social influence, it would appear as though every age—one might almost say each generation—demanded a different interpretation of life and nature, being inspired by different ideals; for the forms of art depend upon the aims and ideals in the mind of artists, who are but children of their age and reflect its thought and sentiment. Pictorial art being the most popular because more intimate, direct, and immediately concerned with the aspects of life, is perhaps more sensitive to such changes of thought and sentiment than other forms of art. This accounts in a great measure for the constantly-shifting point of view of the painter in dealing with the aspects of nature, for instance, if we compare the work of one age, or one school with another, or examine the differences of treatment by different individual artists.

Whereas religion, and the beauty and splendour of life have of old largely inspired painters, nowadays it seems as if the interest was centred upon the wonder and dramatic variety of the world, the aspects of life in different countries, vivid and in-

stantaneous presentment, individual impressions, snap-shots of nature. No doubt the photograph has had a great influence both upon painters and the public. The public eye must be largely influenced by the photograph, but the photograph in the hands of some of its professors has lately taken to imitate the effects and methods of artists. So that it is turn and turn about.

The object of painting however is not *illusion*, otherwise, in the presence of the cinematograph and its marvellous living and moving transcripts from nature, as presented in the fascinating picture theatres, painting would have no chance, for even colour is sometimes given.

But, however wonderful, it is scientific mechanism and not art. The true province of painting is untouched, our national galleries have not lost their attraction, and are not old masters more valuable than ever? The very illusory powers of photography serve to define the true sphere of art, which is a product of the human mind as well as of the eye and hand.

There is another form of pictorial appeal which has, owing to the association of art with commercial enterprise, attained such vast proportions as to count as a popular education of the eye—for good or for evil. I mean the pictorial poster, which might be said to be the most original flourishing and vigorous type of popular art existing, and the only popular form of mural painting. Its too

frequent banality and vulgarity are to be deplored, but to a great extent they are inseparable from the conditions of the existence of the poster; but undoubtedly there is a great amount of artistic ability employed in these designs, which often show, too, the great resources of modern colour-printing. It is part of the wastefulness of our system that so much skill, talent, and labour should be spent on such ephemeral purposes and placed in such incongruous positions and injurious juxtapositions, often appearing in the mass as a sort of sticking-plaster of varied colour upon the doleful face of a dingy street. The same ability under different influences and inspired by different ideals might serve to make eloquent the bare walls of our schools and public buildings with painted histories and legends of our country and race, which might foster the public spirit of our future citizens. Every town should have its history painted in its Town Hall—as Manchester has done in that wonderful series of mural pictures by Madox Brown. There might be competitions in schemes of decoration and mural design of this sort among the students of the local art schools. Is this an ideal?

Well, after all, the great thing is to *have* an ideal, an ideal, too, may be of enormous practical value, for it is capable of inspiring men to accomplish great works which they would never have touched without such a stimulus. Every great work, every

great achievement in art, in social service—in all human effort, has been the result of an ideal in the mind, a vision, a lamp, a torch that has lighted the path that has enabled its bearer to clear away often apparently insuperable difficulties and attain the goal.

Nor is the possession of an ideal less necessary to a people—the nation collectively—than it is to the individual if real progress is to be made. From ideals in art we are led to ideals in life and to the greatest art of all—*The art of Life.* An ideal of national life which would give purpose and impetus and unity to all social efforts at amelioration, something beyond the strife of parties, personal jealousies, and parliamentary manœuvres. Such an ideal may be found in that growing conception of the new age we are entering of *a true co-operative commonwealth*, when the public good, being the main motive, all things that add to the beauty, health, dignity, and comfort of our cities, would be considered as of the first importance, and when, while our ancient history and monuments should be preserved, natural growth and expansion should not be impeded; a state wherein every citizen, every man and woman would find a useful and congenial sphere of work, and each and all would be prepared to do their part in the service of the community, secure of a place at life's table, when friendly emulation should take the place of cut-throat competition; when every mother and every

child would be cared for, and there would be ample provision for old age. Labour being so organized that there would be neither overwork nor unemployment, while there remained abundant leisure for the cultivation of the arts and sciences and the pleasures of life—poverty being unknown, and disease conquered by knowledge and enforcement of the laws of health; death itself faced with calmness or fearlessly met at need in the service or defence of the community.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF "THE BUTTERFLY"

THE APOTHEOSIS OF "THE BUTTERFLY"[1]

THE world, it has been said, takes a man at his own valuation, and, certainly it seems to have accepted even Whistler, at last, at his own by no means modest estimate, and in the commercial sense, indeed, to have considerably exceeded it.

It is true that Whistler had, as an original artist, to pass through the usual stages of neglect and contumely. It is only the common experience of what is called genius, albeit varied and complicated in his case by his combative and whimsical personality.

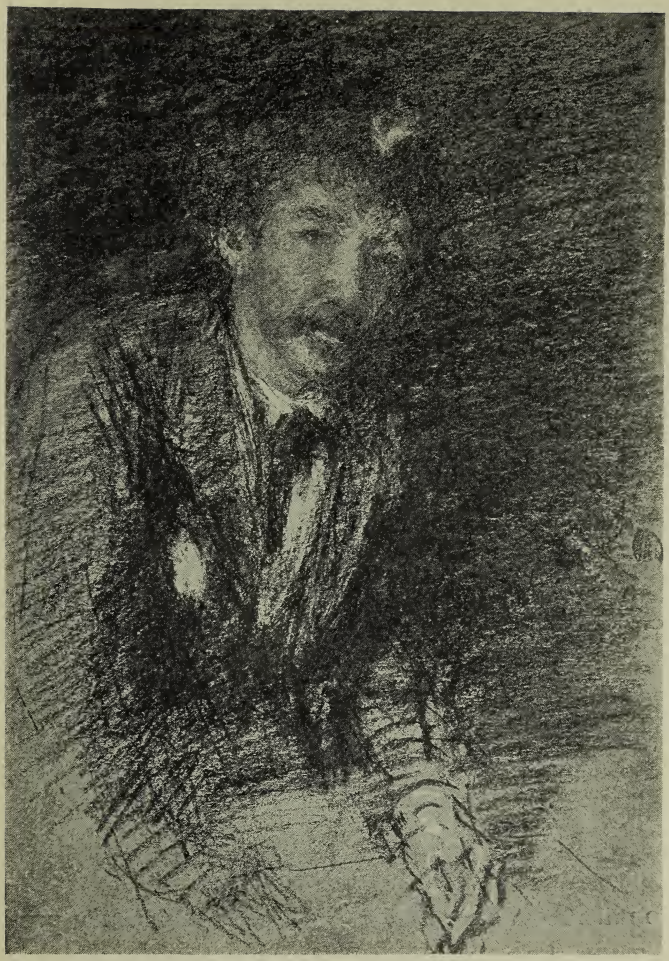
[1] "The Life of J. McNeill Whistler," by E. R. and J. Pennell, in two volumes, illustrated. London: William Heinemann, 1908.

What a pity it is that there are no means of obtaining a just and sober estimate of an artist's powers (as well as a sympathetic one) except by the long wait necessary for the verdict of that Court of Final Appeal—Time.

At present the system seems to be, in the case of any one who shows individuality or independence in art, at first to ridicule, underrate, or abuse. If the innovator survives this process—well, the impression gains ground that there must be something in him, and, if he can only struggle on long enough, and keep his head above water, the tide may turn in his favour—even to such an extent, sometimes, as to carry the genius on the top of it to quite the other extreme of laudatory appreciation, which may land him eventually in almost as dangerous a position, as regards his artistic safety, as that in which he was first discovered.

Between the bitterness of his enemies and the extravagant eulogies of his friends, it becomes almost as difficult for an artist to find his real latitude and longitude as for a ship in a fog. Still more so for other navigators on critical seas anxious to take his true bearings.

Well, "The Butterfly" is caught at last! We have him in Mr. and Mrs. Pennell's two sumptuous volumes, pinned down, as it were, in a glass case, his natural history fully accounted for, both as an artist and as a man. We can study the Whistlerian genius in its various stages, from caterpillar to



PORTRAIT STUDY OF WHISTLER BY HIMSELF.
(From a black and white drawing.)

chrysalis, up to when it flutters gaily over everybody and everything in the garden of life—a butterfly with the sting of a wasp!

The authors have indeed, in a literary sense, adopted the pre-Raphaelite methods, to which in art they appear to be opposed, in painting their literary portrait of the great Impressionist. No one will doubt the patience, care, and zeal with which they have carried out the work, or the devoted loyalty of spirit in which what was evidently regarded as a sacred trust has been fulfilled; but in their natural anxiety to give full relief to the portrait of their hero and idol, the authors have not always been able to be fair to some of his contemporaries or predecessors, or to other forms of art than those which he practised, and they are apt to become a little extravagant in their terms. To assert, for instance, that Whistler was "the greatest artist and most remarkable personality of the nineteenth century" is a little "tall"; but no doubt the authors did not wish, any more than Mr. Wedmore, to "understate." The insertion of the little words *one of* in the above-quoted sentence would have been advisable, considering the number of remarkable personalities and artists the nineteenth century produced. This presentation of Whistler dominating and overtopping everybody reminds one of the method of the mural artists of ancient Egypt, who, in order to glorify their kings and impress

beholders with his powers, represented the monarch as a gigantic figure clutching a handful of diminutive enemies trembling in his grasp, while he flourishes his sword over their heads.

It is, perhaps, one of "life's little ironies" that Whistler, who maintained in his "Ten o'clock" philosophy that the artist, like the unexpected, always "happens," and who took a purely individualistic view of artistic history should be at last fully accounted for on evolutionary principles. It seems strange that he, who apparently held that artists occurred accidentally here and there in the history of the world—like very sparing currants in a suet pudding, the pudding, or public, being always of the same materials, equally "stodgy," indifferent, or ignorant as to art—that Whistler, who might almost be described as the artist of accident, should be portrayed in minute detail under the glare of the limelight, and shown in relation to, and accounted for by, his heredity and environment.

A member of a most respectable family (like "The Newcomes") hailing originally from the Islanders he professed to hate, we may trace the origins of his personal characteristics, the germs of his development and the foundations of his art. His mastery in etching, for instance (perhaps destined to be considered the strongest and most enduring side of his art), had its roots in the technical experience and training of the United

States Coast Survey. It is to be regretted that it was not found possible to include later illustrations of his etched plates in the book, as, with the exception of the pastels and water colours and the earlier pictures, the reproductions generally lose much of the charm, with the colour, of the originals, and most of their atmosphere.

Whistler in himself furnishes another illustration of the different side of his nature an artist often presents in his serious work from that usually perceived in him, by the world in general, as a man. If nothing of his self-assertive, combative, caustic and whimsical personality had been known, such traits could hardly have been suspected in the possessor of the refined taste, the delicate justness of tone, the somewhat austere and restrained decorative sense combined with a certain poetic vagueness, which generally characterize his works.

The work of Whistler at different periods of his life also illustrates the curious fact that artists of the most pronounced individuality of style and method often show how strongly they may become influenced by the work of others.

What Whistler's art would have been had he never seen the work of Courbet, of Velasquez, of Fantin, of Albert Moore, and of the Japanese, who can say? The power of assimilation itself may be an attribute of genius, and it is not so much what he may have absorbed, or from what source he may have derived suggestions, as what use

an artist makes of his derivations that really matters.

The first time I saw Whistler's work was in the old rooms of the Royal Academy when that Institution shared the Gallery in Trafalgar Square with the National Collection, and the old masters and the moderns were next-door neighbours.

There was a certain obscure den opening out of a passage between two of the principal picture galleries, named the Octagon Room, almost as dark as a cellar, but it was here that Whistler's early and wonderful etchings of the Thames side first saw the light—such as it was! in the sixties.

I well remember, too, his early pictures, which also first appeared in the Royal Academy exhibitions in the Trafalgar Square rooms. The quiet power, rich tone, and distinction of "At the Piano," in 1860; the picture of a rocky seashore with a figure of a fisher-girl lying on the sand ("The Coast of Brittany," 1862), "skyed," if I remember rightly, which, Mr. Pennell says, "might have been signed by Courbet"; the lady in a Japanese robe painting a blue pot ("The Lange Leizen—of the Six Marks," 1864); I recall the striking effect of these works among the commonplaces of the usual mixed exhibition. They struck new notes. I also remember the "Wapping," "The Thames in Ice," "The Music Room," and "The Little White Girl," all of which were exhibited at the Royal Academy in the early sixties.

These impressed me more than any other, or later, of Whistler's works. All the above-mentioned early pictures are reproduced in Mr. and Mrs. Pennell's book, and, to my mind, they still hold their place as the strongest and most interesting of the works of the artist in painting.

Later, too, visitors to the winter exhibitions of oil pictures at the Dudley Gallery were surprised by certain "Nocturnes," visions of the Thames in misty twilight with shadowy bridges and ghostly figures and gliding barges, illuminated by twinkling golden lights; these were set in moulded frames of unusual refinement, in green and other tones of gold to suit the key of colour in the picture, and painted on the flat with decorative patterns of a Japanese character in dull blue, including a mysterious unit of pattern or mark, afterwards known as "The Butterfly," and used as a signature upon all Whistler's works.

Then there was a "one man show" in a gallery in Pall Mall (No. 48), opposite Marlborough House, in which "Old Battersea Bridge, Nocturne in blue and gold" loomed large, I remember, and the town was surprised by something fresh in the decorative arrangement of the exhibition, yellow and gray predominating, if I remember rightly, relieved with blue pots and palms. This is mentioned in the Life at p. 179. Then came the famous "Peacock Room" in Prince's Gate, which chiefly sustains Whistler's repute as what one may call a

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[*T. R. Annan and Sons, photo.*

"THE THAMES IN ICE."

practical decorator. It is to be deplored that the room itself was not more beautiful in structure and arrangement, cut up as it was with fidgetty details, with pendants from the ceiling and shelves for china. Still, of course, the business of a decorator is to adapt his scheme to the place decorated, and certainly this was done quite thoroughly by Whistler, and the blue and gold scheme was worked out very consistently and ingeniously upon the theme of the peacock.

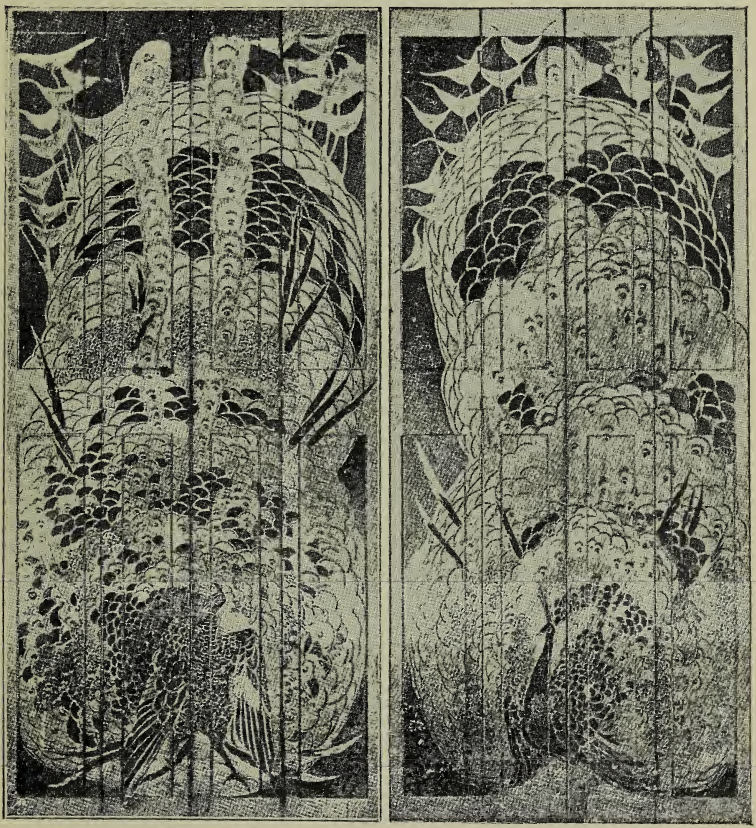
It seems rather pitiful to read of the miserable squabbles over the money, and the personalities and petty spite, however seasoned with the wit of the artist, which seemed to raise a cloud of dust around every transaction in which Whistler was concerned.

A little later, at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, he is in the limelight again, and this time is fallen foul of by John Ruskin.

Much as one may owe to that great writer, and while, however biassed or occasionally mistaken, the wholesome and ennobling influence of his work on the whole must be acknowledged, there could be no justification for his very injudicious and uncritical pronouncement upon that nocturne of Whistler's, but it only meant that Ruskin, as might be supposed, was utterly out of sympathy with that form of art, and did not understand it.

Yet great as was the provocation, it would surely have been more dignified for the artist

attacked to have let the words recoil upon the writer, and to have confidently awaited the verdict



PANELS FROM THE PEACOCK ROOM.

of time, rather than to have dragged the matter into a law-court to be made game of by counsel,

judge, and jury, an utterly incompetent tribunal to form any serious opinion upon a question of art.

One feels, however, to a nature like Whistler's, the sort of notoriety which such situations give to the principals had a distinct attraction, added to the fighting instinct which possessed him.

From this time onward this attraction seems to have grown more and more powerful and to have influenced the life and work of the artist in anything but a fortunate way, and it becomes fatiguing to follow the course of the continual brawls in which he was involved.

He was a conspicuous figure at the Grosvenor Gallery private views in the early days, with his white lock and his long wand, but I never got further than a slight acquaintance with him, personally, which may have been as much my fault (or misfortune) as his.

When we come to his "Ten o'clock," in which Whistler gives us his philosophy of art, we find his views, characteristically, intensely individualistic. Period, traditions, gradual evolution in art and artists, are nothing to him. It is always the "one man show," a purely personal view of art, from the first etcher on a cave-bone to Rembrandt. The artist is always an accident. His predecessors or his contemporaries are nothing. Heredity and environment, economic and social conditions, are of no account. Race or country don't matter. The inspiration of symbol and story is ignored or de-

spised as "literary." The unifying and ennobling influence of architecture, the co-operation of the crafts, the associated chain of human endeavour and experiment in the arts, which link the ages together, and find their highest expression in great public monuments, do not interest him apparently. "Art happened." This is as much as to say one is only concerned with the flower, and the roots, the soil from which it springs or the evolution of the plant itself are matters of no account! Thus the individualistic artist kicks away the ladder by which he arrived and expects the stage to be cleared for him. Ah, well, "Ten o'clock" suited the hour, the audience, and the man. It would be too much to expect brilliant artists and witty inventors of *bons mots*, or butterflies to be profound philosophers as well.

In many ways Whistler, though distinctly a decorative artist, was the complete antithesis of William Morris. Mr. Pennell makes a true remark in his book in speaking of Whistler's ideas in decoration when he says (p. 221, vol. i): "Colour for him (Whistler), was as much decoration as pattern was for William Morris." One would be inclined however to qualify this by saying that Whistler's main principle in decoration, in which he showed a fine taste, was by *tones* of colour; especially was he successful in the choice of pale delicate tones. Whistler appeals to one as a great craftsman in *tone*, rather than as a colourist.

As a painter his most distinctive and original works will always be his "nocturnes," and, of his portraits (which, however, he often treated as landscapes) his fame seems likely chiefly to rest upon those of his Mother and Carlyle.

The picture of Whistler himself, of his character as a man, which this book reveals—in spite of some relieving touches—is not an attractive one.

One can only feel sorry that so genuine an artist was so consumed by his own opinion of himself, and wasted so much time and energy in litigation, and that he could stoop to be professor of "the gentle art of making enemies" or glory in the distinction of being a past-master in the craft of losing friends. Still, he fought the Philistines.

Mr. and Mrs. Pennell's book is admirably done and well illustrated, and it appears moreover in a form—clad in an arrangement of brown, yellow, and gold—such as might have been approved by its fastidious subject.

The book is peppered with Whistler's smart repartees and sayings; of the latter the following dictum strikes me as remarkably true and sound:

"Poverty may induce industry, but it does not produce the fine flower of painting. The test is not poverty, it's money. Give a painter money and see what he will do: if he does not paint his work is well lost to the world."

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